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CONFIDENTIAL.

(6876.)

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403

PART 8.

FURTHER CORRESPONDENCE

RESPECTING THE

AFFAIRS OF TUNIS.

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1896.

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PUBLIC RECORD OFFICE, LONDON

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ERRATUM.

Page 18, No. 16. Date should be April 15, not May 15.

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CONFIDENTIAL.

Further Correspondence respecting the Affairs of Tunis.

PART 8.

No. 1.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 6, 1896.)

(No. 100. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, December 19, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that the two Tuaregs whose arrival here on a mysterious mission I had the honour to mention in my despatch No. 83 of the 30th October have returned to the frontier.

I am informed by a friendly, and, I think, a good authority, that they have received large presents to induce them to influence their friends towards the French, with the view to future action, commercial or aggressive, in the direction of and beyond Ghadames, the ultimate objective being for the moment Rhat, the capital of the Tuareg country, a strategical position commanding the routes of Central African communication both to the valley of the Nile to the east and Lake Tchad to the south.

My informant states that the great advantages that would accrue to them by the possession by the French of Ghadames were pointed out to them, and that they were told that the presents they had received here were only an earnest of the advantages which these tribes would derive from helping the French.

My informant is a man of wealth and position living on the frontier, and his intelligence would seem to confirm the views which I have heard expressed in other quarters, notably those of the Resident himself expressed to me, which I have already had the honour of reporting.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 2.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 20, 1896.)

(No. 101.)

My Lord,

Tunis, December 20, 1895.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that this morning Prince Mohamed Zarouk, son-in-law and nephew of the Bey, sent his lawyer to this Consulate-General to request asylum.

It appeared from this gentleman's account that the Prince had taken refuge at his house, having escaped from the Palace, where he had been put in prison, maltreated, and beaten, for protesting against some of the Bey's acts connected with money affairs,

and he now requested the protection of Her Majesty's Consulate-General, as he feared the bastinado if he were to return or be taken back.

It seemed to me that it was impossible for me under the circumstances of the French occupation of Tunis to accede to such a request in the case of any Tunisian subject, except in that of a slave, and that such protection would be specially difficult in the case of a near relation of the Bey, so I have begged M. Lefevre to convey to the Prince my regret that I cannot give the protection he asked for.

I have further informed the French Chargé d'Affaires unofficially of the matter. He expressed his thanks for my doing so and for my action, and said that his information put a somewhat different complexion on the causes of Mohamed Zarouk's arrest, not quite so favourable to that Prince.

I thought, however, that as I had refused the Prince refuge, I might, in his capacity as Acting Minister for Foreign Affairs, suggest to M. Riffault to use his influence with the Bey towards preventing Mahomed Zarouk from receiving further ill-usage. This he immediately promised to do.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 3.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received January 20.)

(No. 1. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, January 4, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that a construction has lately been made in Fort Bordj-Djedid, just below the Accropolis of Carthage, which is evidently intended for a disappearing gun, if that weapon is not in place already.

Having from personal observations thought that something of the kind was intended, I asked Major Simpson and Captain Hardy—two English artillery officers who missed their steamer to Malta—to examine the fort as they went over the ruins of Carthage, and they confirmed my opinion. They added that it was armed with four 22-centim. breech-loading guns, which would be practically useless to defend the mouth of the harbour of Tunis against iron-clads, and that, moreover, the fort could be taken easily from the rear by a small land party.

These officers also went to Bizerta, and informed me that, in addition to the battery (Fort d'Espagne), 75 ft. above the sea, of four 22-centim. breech-loading guns, there is now underneath it an earthwork commanding the mouth of the canal for a battery of field guns.

They confirmed my report as to the Djebil-Roumadia being the most powerful of the two batteries, as to its armament, and as to both these forts being easy to take from the land. Major Simpson said, indeed, that he did not think that they could be intended for more than to defend Bizerta from a sudden raid, as they would be harmless against a heavy fire.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 4.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Consul-General Haggard.

(No. 1.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, January 22, 1896.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 101 of the 20th ultimo, reporting the circumstances in which Prince Mahomed Zarouk had applied, through his lawyer, M. Lefevre, for an asylum in Her Majesty's Consulate-General.

I approve your refusal to entertain this request, as well as the subsequent steps which you took in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 5.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 2. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, January 6, 1896.

I HAVE had the honour in previous despatches of calling your Lordship's attention to the fact that, notwithstanding the constant attacks of the French press on, and the hostile attitude till lately assumed by, the Resident-General towards the large and industrious Italian population here, the Regency could ill-afford to lose them, and the struggle now going on about the recent imposition of the stamp tax, which forms the subject of my despatches Nos. 1 and 2, Commercial, has illustrated this in a novel manner, and shows that the French are themselves not unaware of the fact.

The Italian Agent and Consul-General informs me that he has had various representations addressed to him by Frenchmen to use his influence with his Government to cause them to intervene to secure the repeal of this obnoxious tax, and he has also told me that the Resident not only sent to—of all people, the editor of the "Unione"—the opposition Italian paper here, to consult him as to how to get out of the difficulty, but also accepted his advice, the result being a "Communiqué" in the "Dépêche" that the retroactive force of the tax should be modified, by not being applied to cases actually before the Courts, and that, moreover, the tax itself should not be applied till the 1st March.

That M. Millet did send for Signor Fabri for some purpose or other I myself know to be true, for I happened to be present when Baron Cottu, the Acting First Secretary of the Residency, was talking to him on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 6.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 3.)

(No. 4. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, January 20, 1896.

WITH reference to my immediately preceding despatch,* I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I learnt to-day from the Resident's Chef du Cabinet that no such communication, as that which was reported in the "Unione," passed between M. Millet and the Italian Agent and Consul-General, with reference to the drawing up of another Treaty between Italy and Tunis to take the place of that lately denounced—that statement being simply a reproduction of one from the "Tribuna," the editor of which paper is the father of that of the "Unione."

M. Dobler, however, seemed to be of the opinion, which is generally held here, that M. Macchiavelli's departure is not unassociated with that subject, even though the personal affairs pleaded by M. Macchiavelli as the cause for his sudden departure on the receipt of a telegram from Rome may also possibly have had something to do with it—these personal affairs being supposed to be his wish to be appointed to the now vacant post of Italian Agent and Consul-General at Cairo.

As I have before had the honour of reporting, I have observed lately a distinct indication on the part of the French Resident of a *rapprochement* towards the Italian Agent and Consul-General and his Colony, but it is impossible for me to judge whether this is the result of a hint from his Government, and, if so, whether this is an indication of their general or merely of their local policy, or, on the other hand, whether this is merely a change of front on the part of M. Millet himself. I have also asked myself lately whether this increase of cordiality was not, to a certain extent, at all events, under the mask of a certain cynical indifference reciprocated on the Italian side.

M. Dobler volunteered the statement that they knew nothing at the Residency of the Agreement which the newspapers report as having been concluded between your Lordship and M. de Courcel with reference to the revision of our Treaty, but stated that they knew that his Excellency had approached your Lordship on the subject.

* Reporting the sudden departure of the Italian Consul-General for Rome.

Of course, if Italy has already come to an independent arrangement with France, the argument against our yielding to French wishes on the matter would seem to fall to the ground; but if she have not yet done so she would, in the event of our coming to such an arrangement, find herself isolated, and be forced to accept the terms dictated to her by France.

The Austro-Hungarian Consul-General remarked to me to-day, in speaking of the newspaper statements on the subject, that he did not believe them, for he did not think it likely that England would make such an arrangement unless she should have come to some previous agreement on the matter with the other Powers, of which Austria was one, which depended in their relations with Tunis on the preservation of the most-favoured-nation clause in our Treaty. I replied that I had no information on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 7.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received February 13.)

(No. 5. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, January 23, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, meeting last night the Resident at the house of the Austrian Consul-General, we had a conversation as to the statement that has appeared in the papers, that an arrangement had been concluded between your Lordship and the French Government for the revision of the Treaty of 1875 between England and Tunis.

Although M. Millet stated that he had no information as to the details of this arrangement, he took it for granted that the report was true, and that it would embrace amongst other things the substitution of a terminable for the existing Treaty in perpetuity, and the renunciation of the most-favoured-nation clause as applying to France, the two points which, he said, he had specially pressed on his Government. He added that, with reference to our cotton goods, there would be no objection to our keeping our right to import them at the present rate of 8 per cent., but that Tunis must have the right to undersell us by letting in French goods free or at a lower rate.

He seemed specially elated at the advantage which, as I had the honour of showing in my immediately preceding despatch, this supposed arrangement would give France in her discussion of the terms of her new Treaty with Italy; and his Chef de Cabinet, who called upon me this morning with reference to another matter, said: "Now we can deal with Italy as we like, whereas had this arrangement not been previously entered into, she would have been able to say that she had little or no interest in concluding a fresh Treaty on the terms we required, as she could always enjoy the privileges of yours." M. Dobler went on to say that, under these circumstances, it was evident that before entering into this arrangement Her Majesty's Government must have come to some previous understanding with Italy on the subject.

Of course, as I have no knowledge either of the conclusion or of the discussion of any such arrangement, all that I had to do was to listen to the remarks of M. Millet and his Chef de Cabinet, and report them to your Lordship.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 8.

Sir Clare Ford to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 1.)

(No. 33.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Rome, April 1, 1896.

THE reports which have appeared in the newspapers respecting a possible advance of France in the direction of Tripoli, and information which has reached the Government from other sources cause them much anxiety.

Should such a step be really contemplated by the French Government, it would

lead to serious results, and there would be a perfect explosion of feeling in this country.

I would be obliged if your Lordship could send me any information which Her Majesty's Government may possess on this matter for communication privately to the Italian Government.

No. 9.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir Clare Ford.

(No. 35.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Foreign Office, April 7, 1896.

YOUR telegram of the 1st instant, inquiring whether Her Majesty's Government are in possession of any information on the subject of a possible movement on the part of France in the direction of Tripoli.

There is no information in the possession of Her Majesty's Government as to any such design, nor do they think it probable that it is seriously entertained by France.

No. 10.

Sir Clare Ford to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 79. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Rome, April 10, 1896.

WITH reference to your Lordship's telegram No. 35 of the 7th instant on the subject of French designs on Tripoli, I have the honour to inform your Lordship that I duly communicated to the Duke of Sermoneta, Minister for Foreign Affairs, the information contained therein, and his Excellency expressed to me his great satisfaction at hearing it.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS CLARE FORD.

No. 11.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 14.)

(No. 6 A. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, March 27, 1896.

ON the 30th of last November I had the honour of receiving a communication from your Lordship, informing me that the Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean would make the arrangements necessary for my being conveyed in a man-of-war round the coast of Tunis on a tour of inspection, but Sir Michael Culme-Seymour not being able to spare a ship at that moment my trip was deferred, but having lately heard from him that it was convenient to him to send the "Fearless" at once I reported the fact to your Lordship, who, in your telegram of the 21st ultimo, authorized me to take advantage of this offer.

The "Fearless" consequently arrived here on the 24th ultimo, and after a stay of four days in Tunis, proceeded on her voyage.

This interval was spent in the receipt and return of official visits, and by the entertainment of the officers who were, with myself, invited by the French Resident-General to a *déjeuner*, at the close of which he bid them welcome in a few chosen words.

M. Millet informed me that he had given instructions to the various authorities at the places we were going to visit that every assistance was to be given and every attention shown to us—and gave instructions to that effect in my presence to the Contrôleur of Kairwan, requesting him to provide carriages to take the officers from Kairwan to the extraordinary Roman remains of El-Djam—thus enabling them to see those remarkable places during my two days' stay at Susa, a round of about 150 miles.

Leaving Tunis on the morning of the 27th the "Fearless" proceeded first of all north to Bizerta—being the first English man-of-war that has entered the new port. The ship went in without any difficulty, the soundings giving 5½ fathoms—thus setting at

rest the question as to its depth and that of the removal of the rock, which formed the subject of your Lordship's despatch No. 5, Confidential, of the 30th July, 1895. There seems little reason to doubt the practical accuracy of the depth of $9\frac{1}{2}$ metres given by the French—this depth, they say, is uniform throughout the length of the canal for a width of 60 metres before the slope begins, the total width at the surface being for the half next the sea 125 metres, and for that next the lake 100 metres.

We anchored inside the lake, just off the spot indicated for the proposed "parc d'artillerie," and received and returned official visits, afterwards attending a dinner given by the French Contrôleur.

The next morning the representative of the Company of the Port of Bizerta came off and took us to visit the fishery station, a monopoly of the Company—the income of which, together with that of the Goletta and Porta Farina fisheries, amounts to about 4,000*l.* a-year—they claim 6,000*l.*, but this appears to be doubtful. They have, it would appear, as yet not much more than this to pay interest on the sum of 200,000*l.* spent by them in the construction of the works, not to mention that on the 200,000*l.* given them by the Tunisian Government in addition to the right of all land they can reclaim.

Mounting the hill we saw the inner lake, where all the navies in the world could be secure from attack from the sea, save by the narrow entrance of the canal.

Some of the officers and I lunched subsequently with Mr. Bourke, the British Consular Agent, giving them an opportunity of examining the fort of Jebel Roumadia. There is no difference in the armament of four 22 centim. (9-inch) guns, and four quick-firing guns, with shields, since my last visit.

We then went back to the town, and by climbing the hill behind saw perfectly right into the fort beyond the Fort d'Espagne. The armament of four guns is unaltered, but Commander Gladstone said that he was convinced that their calibre was not as large as that of the other battery, an opinion which was confirmed by some of the other officers who were able to take rough drawings of the interior, showing the magazine, &c. They declared that these cannon were not more than 6-inch or at most 7-inch, and that they were of a different construction to those in the Jebel Roumadia, being much shorter. This is contrary to the information from French sources hitherto furnished to Her Majesty's Consulate-General by Mr. Bourke, and from other directions.

At Bizerta, the colony of Maltese, though small, bears a large proportion with reference to the interests of other European nations. They own a considerable amount of land surrounding the town, and of house property within it. Mr. Bourke owns a very large tract of land, in the centre of which is situated the fort of Jebel Roumadia, the French Government having acquired the site from him. He also does a very large trade in olive oil and corn, and owns several olive mills in the district. He is by far the largest landowner and merchant in the place, and I am pleased to hear that he is on thoroughly good terms with all classes in the town and district, including the French officials, with whom it is somewhat difficult for an Englishman in his position to agree officially, and in matters of private business.

Situated about 20 miles from Bizerta is another Englishman, who owns one of the finest farms in the Regency; and Mr. Pilter, the large importer of English machinery, owns by far the best managed property in Tunis.

We left after dark and had no difficulty in going through the canal in which, during the time that we were there, the current ran at about the rate of 3 or 4 knots. There seems to be a great divergence in the views of different residents as to the rate of this current, some declaring that it sometimes reaches 8 knots, others that it never exceeds 5 knots. The plans for combatting it are for the moment in abeyance, as the Tunisian Government has refused the request of the Company to undertake the works necessary for that purpose, and neither their own pecuniary position nor prospects of the harbour would appear to justify the very considerable additional outlay necessary.

They appear now to despair of getting any trade to speak of for many years to come, and are devoting their attention to attempting to compete with Algiers and Malta as a coal dépôt. They have now about 3,000 tons of coal waiting on their wharves belonging to an English Company. I learnt subsequently at Malta that there was some prospect of some of the English coal merchants there setting up establishments at Bizerta; but these plans, though probable, did not seem yet to have taken any definite shape.

Nothing could exceed the civility and cordiality of all the officials, both to the officers of the ship and to myself.

I think that the visit of Her Majesty's ship "Fearless" has been useful as affording an opportunity of putting to the test of practical experience the statements as to navigation, armament, &c., which have been made, and as giving a number of English naval officers an opportunity which they have never had before of seeing what the place is really

like from a naval and military point of view. This is the view which they themselves have expressed on the subject.

They will doubtless furnish the Admiralty with Reports on the technical subjects which have already been so exhaustively treated by this Consulate-General that it is hardly necessary for me to do more than allude to them briefly in this Report.

The "Fearless" left Bizerta at nightfall on the 28th, and arrived at Gallipia, on the other side of Cape Bon, on the next morning.

This little known place would well deserve visiting from a picturesque point of view, if it were only for the very remarkable Spanish fortress crowning the summit of a precipitous hill, rising some 500 or 600 feet above the sea.

We were received on landing by the son of Mr. Conversano—the British Consular agent—he himself being away ill, by the Tunisian Kaïd, by the French Contrôleur, by the leading inhabitants of the district, and by a large concourse of natives, many of them on horseback and bearing banners.

The Contrôleur's head-quarters are at Grombalia, whence he had ridden 50 miles to receive me. A breakfast was prepared in a tent erected on the sand, the town being about a mile away.

We sat here for some time watching a very elaborate and interesting fantasia and native dances representing the usual Arab themes—love and war. We then mounted horses, and riding through a richly cultivated and fertile plain I called at the house of Mr. Conversano, and then rode to the hill I have mentioned above. This must have been a very important fortress in former times. Its more recent construction is still in thorough repair externally, and in it are still several rusty cannon. Its strength and position must have rendered it practically impregnable formerly, as it dominates the sea on one side and the plain on the other. I have been informed by a French officer that the reconstruction of this fort, with the view of rendering it effective to contain and resist modern artillery, is contemplated. Apart from the extraordinary natural advantages it offers, this is likely in view of its being the extreme southern point embraced in the military plan for the defence of the Regency in case of European invasion.

Its enceinte incloses a large space, in the middle of which are masses of apparently Greek masonry, which it is said to be. The guide informed me that the whole of the interior is occupied by a vast ancient cistern supported by 100 columns, some of which may be perceived from apertures above. This is still in perfect preservation and in use.

After examining this interesting Castle we rode down the hill to the sea, where are the remains of the ancient city, looked at the fragments of the former double harbour, and rode by the beach back to the tent where we had another phase of the fantasia and then went again on board delighted with the visit to this out-of-the-way spot, where there is not now a single boat, in what must at one time have been a port of considerable importance.

It appears likely that at some time in the not very distant future, when communications are opened, Galipia may again become an important centre, for, though the olives are few and bad, it is a splendid corn-growing district; perhaps this is owing to the fact of the abundance of water, which is good for the one, but bad for the other—there are 7,000 wells in the neighbourhood, from 3 to 5 yards deep only. The soil for cereals is so rich and good that after the barley crop it is usual to have another crop of Indian corn. The French have hardly got any colonists there, for two reasons, which really depend on each other. The first, the fact that the land is dearer there than anywhere else in the Regency; the second, that the Arab holdings are very small and difficult to purchase. There are also, for the same reason, very few other Europeans save Sicilians who work with the Arab owner on the "merasa" system, i.e., they work and plant the land, and take half the crop. The largest proprietor is Mr. Conversano, the British Consular Agent. The Maltese colony is small but flourishing. The produce is sent all over the Regency, supplying the deficiencies of, as this year, a bad harvest in the south, as, the whole country being irrigable, there is never a bad harvest at Galipia. Were the suicidal tobacco monopoly—one of the many causes which interferes with the progress of the country—removed, the plain of Galipia would become even more valuable, as it produces tobacco of all kinds, and of very superior quality.

The "Fearless" left at noon, and arrived at Susa at nightfall.

Mr. Galea, the British Vice-Consul, came at once on board, and, on landing later, we were met by the French Contrôleur and his suite, who conducted us to dine at his house, where we met the Arab Governor, the Officer Commanding the garrison, and the other notabilities of the town.

The next morning I received the official visits of the Maltese colony and of the

Consular Body, and, after breakfast, visited the town, the barracks, and the exceedingly interesting manufactory for extracting oil by means of sulphuric acid from the refuse of the olives after it has gone through its first crushing. I propose to write a short separate Report on this subject, which is one which may be of importance to various British industries.

Susa is a town of some 20,000 inhabitants. It is beautifully situated, and very healthy. The streets are paved and wonderfully clean. It is on the whole the brightest looking town I have seen in the East.

It is a rich, and an increasingly rich town, the source of its wealth being now, as it was in the time of the Romans, and even of the Carthaginians, the olive tree, which makes a forest of all the surrounding country. There are about forty olive mills, many of very large construction, in and around Susa. The surrounding plain is full of large and prosperous villages, which discharge their produce into Susa, whence it is distributed to various ports of the Mediterranean. One of these so-called villages is a town the population of which is estimated at 20,000 inhabitants. Its name is Emeseken, the translation of which is "The Unhappy," but this is a misnomer, for it is apparently a very prosperous place.

In good years a great deal of grain is also grown in the district, and then the barley is of such exceptional quality for brewing purposes that it is much sought after in England, where it appears under the name of "Algerian barley." These good years are, however, rare, as, when the rain does not fall in the early spring, the crop may, as this year, fail altogether.

It is estimated that on an average one year in four is really bad. In such years the vast plain of central Tunis is, as now, a desert, where in good years there are many hundreds of square miles of waving grain. In 1894, which was a good year, there was exported into France, according to the trade Return, from the port of Susa alone wheat to the value of over 3,000,000 fr., and barley to the value of considerably over 1,000,000 fr. It is quite impossible to estimate how much goes to England, as in the same year the official statistics only allow that barley to the extent of 9,000 fr. was sent there, whereas Mr. Galea, the British Vice-Consul, tells me that that year he himself, one of many, shipped barley to England to the value of over 200,000 fr.

The landing at Susa is at present an open roadstead, exposed to the north and east winds, but works are in progress, of which I have the honour to inclose a plan,* which, at the cost of some 6,000,000 fr., will provide the town with a safe harbour of about 30 or 35 hectares, of which 13 hectares, or nearly 30 acres in extent, will be dredged to a depth of about 20 feet. It is estimated that those will be concluded in two years, when it may possibly be supposed that the town will attain greater importance in every way, specially as by that time it will be connected by rail with the other ports of the Regency, and with Algeria. This line will be extended to Kairwan, and thereby tap the great Arab centre of the Regency, whence flow many caravan streams in all directions, specially to the south.

It is useful to notice that Susa will thus become an even more important feeder of English goods for the interior than it is now; and I may mention that, a few weeks back, I observed that at Kairwan, and in all the district towns which I visited during a trip I took in the interior, the bazaars and shops were full of English cotton goods to the practical exclusion, I may say, of those of any other origin, although the trade Returns give no sign of this, as, for instance, at the port of Susa, French textiles figure nearly as largely as do English, whereas there is absolutely no comparison between the amounts really imported from the two countries in the actual supply—one of the plans being, as I am informed on the best authority, to count the goods coming in French bottoms as French. Now, as there is only one direct line of steamers from England, nearly all our goods tranship, generally into French boats, at Marseilles or Malta, and consequently are entered in the trade Returns as French goods. It is useful to bear this in mind in view of the consideration of the value of our trade in cotton goods—chiefly here, which, though it is, for the reasons I have stated, impossible to estimate, is really very great, far exceeding in value that of France, indeed, that of all other nations put together, and which, moreover, as the French gradually open up the routes to the south by roads and railways, is capable of indefinite extension among the teeming populations of the interior.

The British colony is by far the most numerous and the richest; almost all the trade is in their hands, and they number amongst them several large landowners and householders. The principal merchants in English cotton goods are British subjects. They also occupy themselves largely in the manufacture of olive oil, and own several large mills in the district. A very important manufactory of bricks and tiles, which supplies the whole Regency and Tripoli, also is owned by a British subject. The colony have at their

* Not printed.

head Mr. Galea, the British Vice-Consul, a gentleman of considerable wealth, in whose hands, in addition to a large trade in grain, is the principal export of esparto grass. He sets the colony an admirable example of intelligence and honourable dealing, and is highly respected by all classes—including the French authorities, who spoke to me in the highest terms of his value as a citizen.

The garrison of Susa consists of about 1,500 men, made up of eight companies of tirailleurs—native troops—a battery of artillery, and a few engineers, Army Service Corps, &c. There is accommodation for 3,000 men, including barracks for cavalry. About 1,500 more men are quartered in various towns in the military district—two companies at Kairwan, one at Zaghuan, one at Monastir, &c.

On the 3rd I drove with Mr. Galea to Monastir, about 15 miles distant by road though not more than two-thirds of that distance by sea. The offing is, however, so far from the port—which, again, is so far from the town, 3 miles—that it was advisable to go by road.

We drove through a sandy waste forming one of the "Schotts" of this country, and past a beautiful oasis, then through a fertile plain until we were met by the Arab Governor, the French Consular Agent, and Mr. Portelli, the English Consular Agent.

Monastir is a very clean and picturesque town of some 6,000 inhabitants. It has a tunny fishery and some olive mills. It seems a flourishing place enough, but from the difficulties of landing, and the comparative smallness of the fertile district, added to its isolation, it seems hardly likely that, though the surrounding land is productive and well cultivated, it will ever be a place of any importance.

After receiving the English colony, being entertained at breakfast by the Consular Agent and at a "punch" given in my honour by the "Cercle International," and returning the visits of the Arab Governor and the French Consular Agent, we drove back to Susa.

In Monastir, though the British colony is slightly outnumbered by the Italians, it is much richer and has more commerce in its hands. The oil merchant doing the largest trade in the whole Regency is a British subject at Monastir. He has dealings with Malta, Marseilles, and all the principal oil centres of the Mediterranean, and has thereby gained a very large fortune. I remarked here, as elsewhere, that all the shops were filled with English cotton goods.

On the following day we proceeded to Mehdiya, the city of the "Mahdi," the "Africa" of the Spaniards and of the Knights of St. John.

The remarkable position of this town, built as it is on a peninsula, ending in a height at its point, a mile long, jutting out into the sea, the neck of which is not over 100 yards in width, accounts for its importance and fame as a fortress in ancient and mediæval times. Considerable traces of the Roman fortifications still exist, while the old Phœnician inner harbour yet remains, and all the rising ground is still hollowed for the storage of water and grain. The Castle, probably built in its present form by the Spaniards, though bearing traces of early Arab workmanship, and doubtless occupying the site of a far more ancient fortress, is a very striking object from the sea—at the point of the peninsula. It is in a perfect state of repair, as, indeed, is the other Castle lower in the city, while the town itself is clean and flourishing.

It numbers about 8,000 inhabitants, including some hundreds of Europeans.

Mr. Violante, the British Consular Agent, accompanied by the French "Contrôleur Supplémentaire," came on board directly we anchored, and we dined with the latter that evening, being met on landing by a large concourse of inhabitants, Arab and European, who followed us to his house, while the search-light of Her Majesty's ship "Fearless" lit up the ancient port and picturesque battlements of the fortifications. This created a great effect on the Arabs, as it appears that no English man-of-war has been here since 1881, when Admiral Tryon paid the place a visit in the "Monarch."

Mehdiya must have been a town of great importance in Phœnician times, as it appears that a rising, rocky ground, extending along the sea for 11 kilom., is filled throughout its entire length by Phœnician tombs, many of which have, however, been rifled by their Roman and Arab successors, and used over again.

As the President of the Municipality offered to open one of these tombs for us next day, we landed at 9 A.M. amidst a large crowd, and drove about 4 miles from the town, where two tombs were in course of excavation; one of these was found to have been rifled before; the other had a tomb on each side of the central chamber which was filled with earth. Of these the larger had also been visited, but the smaller, opposite but lower down, had escaped observation. On removing the large slab of rock forming the door were seen two slabs on the vaulted chamber, on one of which three bodies had been placed apparently, from the position of the bones, in a sitting position, as was the case with the

so-called body of Agamemnon at Mycenæ. Amongst the bones were numerous articles of pottery, lamps, pitchers, and cups of beautiful shape, but with the exception of one of the lamps without any pattern engraved or painted. Perhaps the most curious thing in the tomb was a small pot of rouge, which was so perfectly preserved that it might still be as useful to a modern lady as it was to the Phœnician belle by whose side it was placed in readiness in case she should want it in her passage through Hades.

Having photographed the tomb as it was when opened, we returned to the town, and, after breakfasting together with the French "Contrôleur" and other Notables with the British Consular Agent, returned on board in the afternoon. A gentleman, one of the principal British merchants, when at Mr. Violante's house, expressed his delight at my visit in a man-of-war, which would, he said, have a very good effect—a sentiment which, he said, he shared with all British subjects on the coast.

Mehdia appears to be a prosperous place; the trade is improving, and, though placed as it is between the larger ports of Susa and Sfax, it is not likely, for long years at all events, to regain the importance which they have taken from it, its position with reference to the fertile back country must, as that becomes repopulated, always give it a certain importance, specially as the surrounding land is rich and well cultivated. The French "Contrôleur" stated that it was worth from 30*l.* to 40*l.* an acre—as much, that is to say, as land in northern France. I observed here the best crops I had yet seen, better even than those at Galippa, although this year, throughout the south of the Regency generally, there is no promise of harvest. Here, as elsewhere, all the population is clothed in English cottons. The exports are chiefly, as elsewhere on the coast, oil, grain, and a little halfa (esparto grass); trade is improving generally. Mr. Violante, the British Consular Agent, seems an intelligent young man. He is one of the wealthiest inhabitants, appears to be much respected, and was spoken of in high terms by the French "Contrôleur Suppléant," and by the other people with whom I conversed.

Leaving Mehdia on the evening of the 4th we reached Sfax early the next morning.

The British Vice-Consul and the French Administrative and Municipal authorities came off to the "Fearless," and on landing we were greeted by the usual throng of people.

Next to Tunis, Sfax is said to be the most populous town in the Regency, the population of the town and suburbs being computed at 50,000.

The bazaars are large, and were densely thronged with people. Business seemed very active. The Arab inhabitants of Sfax are renowned for their enterprise throughout the Mussulman world, and are found in numbers as merchants in Egypt and Turkey. Alone in Sfax was any resistance shown to the French occupation. After several days' bombardment, the French troops met with stout resistance on landing, and did not gain full possession of the town till after two days' hard street fighting.

For at least 10 miles on either side of the town along the sea-shore extend the country houses of the natives, each in its own large and fruitful garden.

The European quarter is distinct from the rest of the town, which could not bear comparison with its rival, Susa, in cleanliness.

On arriving we found carriages ready, so as to enable us to visit what I can only call the forest of olives, which extends uninterruptedly 40 kilom. into the interior by about 50 kilom. along the coast, and comprises over two millions of trees.

This plantation was only begun about fifty years ago. It is still continuing, and it is not too much to hope that ultimately Tunis may, by taking an example from Sfax, regain the wealth and importance that it had in the time of the Romans.

It is impossible to ride through the interior without every few hundred paces coming across the ruins of an ancient Roman olive mill or villa. The cisterns for the storage of water are innumerable, and require but little labour to be made as useful as they were eighteen centuries back. Every watercourse shows traces of dams for facilitating irrigation, while every 20 or 25 miles one comes across the ruins of a large city with baths, amphitheatre, triumphal arches and temples. This wealth was chiefly owing to the olive, and Sfax shows that there is no reason why this prosperity should not be restored.

It might be supposed that this planting is due to French influence. This is not the case, for it was undertaken and carried out chiefly before the French occupation, and the present system, which is a very perfect one, is only that which they found in force on their arrival.

It is as follows:—

Waste land of a sandy nature is bought from the Government at 10 fr. a hectare (rather more than 2 acres).

This land is then given by the purchaser to an Arab peasant, who plants the trees and ploughs the land, not leaving a stone or a weed visible. The trees are planted from 20 to 25 yards apart—thus giving each tree ample breathing space. The peasant works the land for seven years, after which time the olive begins to give a fair crop. After this period the plantation of olives is divided into two equal portions, for which lots are drawn, one portion becoming the absolute property of the peasant, the other remaining in the hands of the original proprietor. It is calculated that in this way the actual outlay to the original proprietor for the trees in his portion comes to about 5 fr. each. The finest olive trees in Sfax are calculated to bring in now about 3 fr. a-year each.

On reaching the highest point in the forest, about 14 miles from Sfax, we found some tents pitched, and were greeted by the Arab Governor and his suite, who invited us to lunch. From this point as far as and further than the eye could reach, in every direction, were apparently endless rows of flourishing olives.

On returning to the town I received the British Colony, and was met by the Civil and Ecclesiastical authorities.

The principal Notables of the town were invited to meet us, and afterwards we returned on board.

As may be supposed, the principal article exported is olive oil. There is also a very important sponge fishery, which is mostly carried on by Greek fishermen, although a few Sicilians and Maltese also engage in the fishery. At the moment we were at Sfax there were over 250 Greek fishermen's three-masted boats lying in front of the town. There is also a considerable exportation of esparto grass, which trade is entirely in British hands, and is consequently discouraged, greatly injured, in fact, by the French authorities, although the collecting of this grass gives employment to a great number of natives, to whom in years of scarcity or famine it is the chief, if not the only, means of subsistence.

This shortsighted policy on the part of the French, dictated by jealousy of English enterprise, fatal on the face of it to the interests of the country which they protect, is a fair sign of what would be their action if they had the power of strangling our trade in cotton and other English goods, for if from a mere policy of blind jealousy they are prepared to encounter loss and injure a trade which they acknowledge to be advantageous, and to bring money into the country, how much more would they do so towards one which, according to their ideas of political economy, injures the production of France.

There is a fair export of grain, but not so large as from Susa.

The British colony is the most numerous and the wealthiest, the Italians coming next, there being very few French settled in the district, apart from the Government officials.

A large number of olive groves are owned by various members of the British Colony, amongst whom are the principal merchants of the town, the English trade being almost if not quite in their hands.

The works of the port, which are to cost only 60,000*l.*, are in progress. I have the honour to inclose a plan of them.* If, as is anticipated, the projected line from Gafsa brings to the port the immense phosphate deposits there—which are said to equal, if not to excel those at Tebessa—Sfax may have a very prosperous future before her.

At present the roadstead is exposed to the south-east and south winds, the reef protecting it from other quarters. It is proposed ultimately to shorten the distance from Susa by almost 50 miles by cutting a channel through a narrow neck of the sand-banks which now extend so far out as to double the voyage. These were exceedingly dangerous until the present admirable system of buoys and lights. It may almost be said that it is like going along a lighted street, indeed the lighting of the coast of Tunis is admirable throughout. This is in great part due to the action of Her Majesty's Government in presenting the Bey with this means of preventing shipwrecks.

Sfax is a military centre. The garrison consists of about 1,200 men of all arms under a Colonel.

We left for Gabes the night of the 5th March and arrived the next morning. The British Consular Agent and the Contrôleur came off to visit us, but unfortunately I was not well and was unable to accompany them on shore, but, as I was there last year, this did not matter much. Gabes is practically a new place founded by the French for military and commercial reasons as being the nearest place on the coast as a basis of operations in the direction of the Soudan, specially with reference to Ghadames.

It would appear that the aggressive intentions entertained by or accredited to the French last year have been allowed to drop, at all events for the present, while even the

* Not printed.

commercial movements which were in contemplation have shown no sign of life. It is of course impossible to say whether this is due to the initiation of the French Government, or to the fact that the Resident-General has found his hands sufficiently filled by matters of internal administration. Whatever may be the cause, General Allegro's semi-military, semi-commercial, caravan, the formation and aim of which were announced last year with a flourish of trumpets, would seem to have died a natural death, while, with the exception of the arrival of one caravan laden with dye, there seems to have been no intercourse for a long time with Ghadames or its neighbourhood.

It may, however, prove that when M. Millet has time and opportunity he may, if he stops here, give effect to his avowed intentions which I had the honour of reporting last year, for which Gabes will probably be the basis of operations, but I think it probable that, whatever he may say to the contrary, unless circumstances alter the policy of Europe at Constantinople or elsewhere, these are hardly likely at present to involve any aggression on Ghadames, which is indisputably Turkish territory, and is moreover a point to which the Porte attaches considerable value, not only with reference to their prestige, but also as being an important trade centre, as the different caravan routes from the whole of Northern and Central Africa converge here, reaching from the Atlantic on one side to the Upper Nile on the other. Whilst at Malta Captain Ewart, the Military Secretary to the Governor, told me that from what he had observed during a recent visit to Tripoli he did not think that much trade was actually passing through that town to Ghat through Ghadames, but that the road was open. This may, however, be only owing to temporary causes, and, such as it is, this is the trade which the French would like to tap and to direct into and through Tunis and Algeria, and it is hardly likely that the Porte will allow them to do so without at least a diplomatic struggle, which under present circumstances the French Government may hardly consider it opportune to provoke. But there is doubtless some motive for the stationing of a considerable garrison at a small seaside oasis. I am informed that the garrison there numbers altogether 1,500 men and there are detachments at various frontier posts, who might serve as they have served as "Agents Provocateurs" in the event of a repetition of the policy embodied in the "massacres de Kroumisie" being decided upon at some future time. Only three days after writing the above I saw a quotation from a French paper, the "Petite République," expressing these last remarks.

The "Petite République" stated that the French Government had decided that unless the aggressions of the Tripolitan tribes ceased, it might be necessary to apply strong repressive measures. I had made it my business to gather all the information possible on this subject from all possible sources during my trip, and had heard from all authorities without exception, that the frontier was at that moment, and had been for some time, absolutely quiet.

On my return to Tunis, M. Revoil, the French "Adjoint" to the Resident-General, assured me, also, that there was no foundation for the report, which was possibly, therefore, only a "ballon d'essai."

Meanwhile, Gabes is a small town, with a small trade in the usual article, exports of oil, corn, wine, and esparto grass, and imports of English cotton goods. All these may be said to be in the hands of British subjects, and Mr. Galea—the British Vice-Consul at Susa—owns literally the whole place. Gabes is talked of as the proposed terminus of the visionary trans-Sahara Railway, but until this is made or the French succeed in opening up the trade to the south, it is hardly likely to rise to any importance as a commercial centre.

Leaving Gabes in the afternoon of the 6th, we reached the Island of Djerba on the morning of the next day, that is to say that Her Majesty's ship "Fearless" anchored 6 miles off the town of Souk-el-Giber, as near as it was safe for her to approach the land.

This circumstance would seem to prevent the possibility of Djerba ever becoming a really important place, rich and fertile as it is.

This is, as your Lordship is doubtless aware, considered to be the most likely spot to be the island of the "Lotophagi" and the date palm trees with which the island is still covered, to have furnished the legendary ambrosial food of the weary, storm-tossed Greek mariners, who perhaps set the fashion of going there which is followed by their descendants to the present day, for I observed a number of Greek boats who came there, I was told, annually for the sponge fishery. As the boat conveyed us to land over the shallow water we could plainly see the sponges growing on the bottom.

The British Consular Agent and the French Acting Contrôleur came off to visit me immediately we anchored, and accompanied us on shore, the steam launch touching bottom in places at least 2 miles from shore; finally, we could go no further in her, so

we were transferred into a rowing-boat which conveyed us on shore, where the landing-stage was thronged with the inhabitants of the island.

After paying the usual official visits and the presentation of the Arab Governor and the British colony, we visited two exceedingly interesting mosques, this being, with the exception of Kairwan, the holiness of which has been gravely compromised by the French troops after the taking of that sacred town, the only place in Tunis where non-Mussulmans may enter Mahomedan places of worship. This is here from pure absence of fanaticism, and the privilege is, unlike Kairwan, extended also to Jews, for Mr. Pariente, the Acting British Consular Agent, a member of that religion, formed one of our party.

We rode to a beautiful garden about 5 miles from the town, through groves of olives, oranges, and date palms which indeed cover the island throughout its very considerable extent.

The Arab Governor attributed to the Romans the planting of the enormous olives, through groves of which we passed. I saw by the roadside the largest I have ever seen, and some of the Greek and [?] trees are very large. This was at least 10 feet in diameter, and we were informed that there were many in the island of greater size.

A fresh breeze was blowing, and it appeared a perfectly ideal place for winter residence. We were told that fever is unknown, and that even in summer, though Djerba is much further south, the heat never approaches that of Tunis, as there is always a sea breeze, while something perhaps in the formation of the surrounding land would seem to prevent the sirocco reaching it, for the island is not visited, as we were informed, save at very rare intervals, with that fiery scourge of the rest of North Africa. In winter the inhabitants declare it to be equally free from cold winds, and, if it becomes known to the world, Djerba may well develop into a health resort. I have, since my arrival in Tunis, heard of extraordinary cases of arrest of consumption during residence in the island.

Whether there be any truth in the theory which identifies Djerba as the home of the Lotophagi, or even in the Homeric story itself, it might well happen that this favoured spot might represent to the early Greek imagination the type of an earthly paradise, which may be embodied in the legend.

It appears that, as we were informed, but little chance exists of the plan of making Bongrora—the inland sea at the back of the island—into a second Bizerta, being carried into effect—at least not for many years to come—for the difficulties of navigation for large ships of both the channels are so great as to be almost insurmountable. The ancient causeway connecting Djerba with the mainland is still used by the Arabs, who swim across the opening in the centre which was formerly doubtless occupied by a drawbridge.

The population of the island is about 35,000, of whom 5,000 are Jews, inhabiting chiefly two large villages composed entirely of their race. Mr. Pariente, himself a Jew, but of Gibraltar origin, said that they had been there from time immemorial, probably from the time of the Romans, and possibly from a much earlier age. They take part in the ordinary avocations of the island, and find it hard to do more than hold their own in trade with the native inhabitants, who are known throughout the East for their keenness and astuteness in commercial matters. They manufacture very fine woollen goods, which are exported all over the Mussulman world, their "spécialité" being handsome rugs of white wool, with stripes of bright-coloured silk, which are very beautiful, and much sought after throughout the East.

In addition to this, corn and oil are extensively exported, and cotton goods imported—nearly all this trade—if not all, being in the hands of British subjects, who form far the most important colony in the island, in numbers, wealth, and respectability; the Italians being insignificant, and the French hardly existing at all, outside the officials. The French Acting Contrôleur spoke to me in the highest terms of their personal behaviour, thereby confirming all the reports of their countrymen which I had heard from all sources, specially from the French officials during my stay at the different parts which I visited.

Djerba being the southernmost port, where there is a British Consular Agent, my tour here ceased. There is, however, to the south a small port, called Garzis, where there is a "Bureau de Renseignements," under the direction of a Lieutenant. A company of soldiers, under the orders of a Captain, is also stationed there, and the town is connected by telegraph with the rest of the Regency. There the British colony is the most numerous. Along the Tripolitan frontier to the south are stationed several small outposts of French troops at Chiucha Tatouin, Borj Bougharda Medinine, and lately it would seem that a new post has been established to watch, and perhaps threaten Zemila and Nazzan, just across the frontier. The pretext for these posts is the setting up of a market which enables the French to influence the tribes on both sides of the frontier, who come there to barter their goods.

Your Lordship will, moreover, have observed that at every port I have had occasion to mention the British colony is the most important in all respects. Most of the import trade is in their hands, and practically all that in cotton goods, which clothe generally the 2,000,000, more or less, of inhabitants of the Regency, passes through their hands. All the best wool is also imported from England.

Apart from the quality of our goods, it is to the protection afforded by our Treaty that these British subjects owe their prosperity, for, without that protection, the destruction of our trade which would probably result from French oppressive fiscal measures, would equally involve the ruin of the traders. The very serious question would then present itself as to how to provide for the future of these people. They could not return to Malta, where the population is already four times as dense as that of Belgium, the most densely populated country in Europe. Where would they go to, and how could they live?

Whilst on this trip, and on a previous journey which I made to Kairwan and El Djem, I learnt to understand the outcry which is constantly being raised against the unfair treatment accorded by the Government to the south, as compared with that enjoyed by the north, of the Regency.

Your Lordship will have observed that throughout my trip, which, save to Bizerta, was in a southerly direction, I noticed the dearth of French settlers. Now this country is worked not for the benefit of the mass of the population, but for that of the army of functionaries, a few French financial adventurers, and of the few thousand Frenchmen settled in it. For them taxes are levied; for them bridges are built; for them roads, useless to the Arab, are made; for them, in fact, the revenues of the Regency are drained.

Now, there being but few Frenchmen in the south, that region has to devote its resources to help the Arabs of the north to support the French "colons" settled among the latter. There is, therefore, but little left to supply the real wants of the actual inhabitants of that region.

There is a remarkable instance of this in the immediate neighbourhood of my own house at the Marsa. At a distance of about 7 miles is a large village, called Ariana. The road from the Marsa to Ariana is 15 kilom. in length, and at first I was puzzled by its extraordinary windings, until I noticed that the points of each zigzag was directed towards a little French farm-house. Now, the enormous expense of this road, as doubtless of many more in the north of the Regency, was paid for by the Arab, who rarely utilizes it, for he prefers to use with his araba, his camels, or his mules the rougher, perhaps, but more direct "pistes." So much for the north. In the south it is only necessary that I should mention that the main road leading into the interior from Sfax—the second largest city in the Regency—along which there is enormous traffic, which really requires a good road, is one of these "pistes," in a deplorable condition, for the cause to be at once apparent. As I have before explained, there are no French "colons," or very few. The money thus drained from the south is not only spent, but wasted. As an instance of the reckless manner in which money is expended on these roads, I may mention the fact that it is usual to erect, at a distance of from every 2 to 3 kilom., houses for the "cantonniers," thus creating an army of small employés, who have to be maintained, and who practically do nothing towards the maintenance of the roads in thorough repair. Each of these houses costs on an average 12,500 fr., and only French lime must be used in their construction, though infinitely inferior to the native product, and brought into the country at an exorbitant price. Can any system be more disastrous than this for the true prosperity of the country? It is carried out in every particular, great and small.

A famine was expected in the south this year which it is hoped that late rains may have arrested. Was any precaution to meet this taken? No; why? Because it would not affect French "colons" to any appreciable extent. The Resident General would not even keep his promise to reduce the export tax on esparto grass, which might have, had the threatened famine occurred, saved thousands from starvation.

The French Contrôleurs at more than one place spoke to me very bitterly of the shortsighted policy of the Government which would, if left to itself, completely strangle all real progress, and as it is to be expected that this will increase rather than decrease, I greatly fear that so long as the French dominate Tunis, no thorough improvements in the well-being, the prosperity, and the civilization of the people, is to be expected.

The French authorities throughout, by the orders of the Resident-General, showed the officers of Her Majesty's ship "Fearless" and myself every attention and courtesy. It has been with the object of showing this that I have in the foregoing remarks mentioned the occasions on which we were entertained, the officials who came to meet us, &c., details which are otherwise without interest.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 11*.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 13.)

(No. 7. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, April 2, 1896.

I HAVE observed that lately the tone of the "Dépêche Tunisienne," the semi-official organ of the French Residency here, has been somewhat hostile towards England, and on the 31st ultimo appeared in the most conspicuous position, and in large type, the inclosed account of the lecture of a M. de Morès—who has lately come from the Tuareg country, and announces his intention of joining the Dervishes on the Nile—in which he attacked Great Britain in a very violent manner, thus giving an importance to his views which their extravagance and absurdity would not seem to justify.

I am informed that his language was even more violent than this résumé of it conveys, but the "Dépêche" professes to reproduce exactly the words of the Resolution passed at the meeting at the close of M. de Morès' Address, the accuracy of which has been confirmed to me in other quarters. On this point, however, your Lordship will probably be in a position to judge, as I am informed that the Resolution was sent to you for communication to the Queen as the "guest of France."

The "Dépêche" does not, however, allude to this strangely distorted view of the duties of hospitality towards a Sovereign, nor does it mention that there were present at the meeting until its close, and consequently parties, at least tacitly, both to the terms of the Resolution and to its crowning impertinence, General Valensi, the so-called interpreter of the Bey, who represents His Highness on all official occasions connected with foreign Powers, a Tunisian officer of rank in full uniform, and, with the exception of the members of the Residency, nearly all the higher French functionaries, including General Leclerc, who is not only the General Commanding the French forces in Tunis, but is also, in that capacity, the Bey's Minister for War, M. Roy, the Secretary of the Tunisian Government, and M. Paullier, the Minister of Public Works.

I may mention that M. de Morès, who is an apostle of the anti-Semites, intended his lecture first of all to be an attack on the Jews, but he was warned against this by the authorities, who, however, not only did not appear to consider that an attack on England of this character was at least equally objectionable, but actually, by the presence of some of them, and by their subsequent conduct, gave to this otherwise absurd effusion whatever importance it possesses.

The nature of the Address was, I am informed, so well known beforehand that an Englishman resident here tells me that he did not attend the lecture because he knew more or less what was going to be said, and, further, it is well known that M. de Morès was at the Residency on the same day previous to the delivery of his lecture.

The "Protectorat," from which I have also the honour to inclose a cutting on the subject, which in its last paragraph states that the Resident deserves credit for having openly manifested his sympathy for M. de Morès, is a paper which is a strong supporter of the Residency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 11*.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of March 31, 1896.

LA CONFÉRENCE DE M. DE MORÈS.

C'EST devant une salle archi-comble que M. de Morès a donné, Dimanche soir, au Théâtre Français, sa conférence annoncée depuis deux ou trois jours, sur la "pénétration au Soudan, la Méditerranée aux riverains et l'alliance Franco-Islamique."

Du parterre aux deuxième galeries, tout était envahi et il a fallu fermer les portes pour empêcher l'irruption de la foule qui se pressait encore pour entrer, quand, depuis longtemps déjà, il ne restait plus une seule place vacante.

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E*

Le Conférencier.

M. de Morès, grand, jeune encore, portant la moustache, reste bien, même sur la scène, l'officier de cavalerie qu'il a jadis été. Sa parole est chaude, vibrante, et coule avec une rapidité superbe, pareille à un fleuve trop plein qui cherche à se répandre.

L'entraînement même de cette parole fait qu'elle n'est pas toujours peut-être extrêmement châtiée; elle a des irrégularités, parfois aussi des obscurités dont nous ne serions pas étonnés que plusieurs aient été voulues. En raison du milieu dans lequel il parlait, l'orateur n'était sans doute pas en effet entièrement libre de ses allures et voilait, pensons-nous, une partie de sa pensée sous des mots d'ailleurs assez transparents.

Quoi qu'il en soit, cette parole, autant par ses qualités que par ses défauts, échappe beaucoup à l'analyse.

M. de Morès est de ceux qu'il faut nécessairement entendre si l'on tient à se faire une exacte idée de ce qu'ils ont dit et de la puissance avec laquelle ils l'ont dit. Tout le secret de cette puissance vient d'ailleurs d'une conviction ardente et profonde, qui ne cherche ses effets ni dans les cris passionnés, ni dans les gestes dramatiques. Son accent est presque uniforme en effet, et, la plupart du temps, il parle les bras croisés sur la poitrine. On dirait que, sous la pression intérieure, elle est prête à éclater et qu'il cherche à la contenir.

L'Alliance Franco-Islamique au point de vue politique et au point de vue commercial.

Après quelques mots de remerciement à l'auditoire qui se presse pour l'entendre, M. de Morès, entrant de suite dans le vif de son sujet, proclame nettement l'utilité, la nécessité même de l'alliance Franco-Islamique, tant au point de vue politique qu'au point de vue commercial; au point de vue politique, parce qu'elle est la seule manière possible de briser cette néfaste puissance de l'Angleterre dont on retrouve l'or et la main dans toutes les affaires louches. Elle sent si bien d'instinct elle-même cette force de résistance que peut, avec la France, lui opposer l'Islam que nous voyons éclater prématurément, et coup sur coup, depuis quelque temps, les multiples fourneaux de mine à l'aide desquels elle espérait faire sauter ce foyer d'opposition qui la gêne et qui peut l'arrêter. Telle sont les causes de l'affaire de Johannesburg, de ces révolutions provoquées et payées en Arménie, et aujourd'hui de l'expédition commencée contre les Derviches et de l'entrée de 800 soldats au Maroc.

Heureusement tous ces pétards éclatent trop vite et ne font point les ruines qu'ils étaient destinés à accomplir.

Si l'alliance avec l'Islam s'impose au point de vue politique, elle s'impose plus encore au point de vue commercial.

La situation financière de l'Europe, à l'heure actuelle, est épouvantable. Elle est telle qu'aucun Gouvernement n'ose la regarder en face. Tous les pouvoirs Européens se bornent à tâcher de gagner du temps, à reculer la catastrophe de quelques mois ou de quelques années. Quand on pense que la dette flottante de la France est de 2 milliards, celle de l'Italie de 2 milliards et celle de toutes les autres nations de l'Europe à l'avenant, on ne peut s'empêcher de reconnaître que nous marchons à la faillite. L'Europe ressemble à ces particuliers qui, donnant beaucoup plus que leurs revenus, emprunteraient 30 ou 40 pour cent sur leurs capitaux. Ils arriveraient vite et fatalement à la ruine; nous y allons également.

Il n'y a qu'un moyen de conjurer le désastre: c'est d'arracher à l'Angleterre, qui cherche à l'accaparer, le marché entier de l'Afrique, et de l'assurer aux seuls peuples riverains de la Méditerranée. La chose est possible; elle est même aisée.

La Pénétration du Soudan.

Cette pensée est celle du Colonel de Polignac. Depuis quarante ans, il s'occupe de ces questions; il a appris les dialectes Arabes, il s'est mis en rapport avec les Chefs du désert, et c'est sur ses conseils et avec ses instructions, après m'être pénétré de ses idées, que j'entends moi-même le seconder et ramener à la France tout ce marché du Centre Africain.

Nous avons fait, en 1862, des Traités avec les Touaregs; ils les ont observés, nous les avons violés. Ces gens sont caravaniers, ce sont les capitaines au long cours

du désert, les convoyeurs de toutes les caravanes et de toutes les marchandises; ils vivent de cela. On leur a fait croire que nous voulions les opprimer et détruire leur commerce. De là, les massacres qu'ils ont commis, et le sang qui a coulé. Il faut leur faire entendre, au contraire, que nous ne voulons nullement entraver ce commerce, que nous voulons les aider plutôt dans leur métier de convoyeurs en les protégeant et en faisant avec eux de loyaux échanges. Et, alors, nous pourrions compter sur eux.

L'occasion est excellente, du reste, de renouer avec eux les relations. Par suite d'une sécheresse persistante depuis plusieurs années, ces malheureux meurent littéralement de faim, à l'heure actuelle. Il faut se cotiser, leur envoyer du blé; il faut demander aux grands magasins leurs marchandises défranchies, et les faire parvenir au désert avec des paroles de paix et de fraternité. Quelques charges de farines feront plus pour nous que toutes les forces d'une armée. Quand on leur dira: Ce sont vos amis de France qui vous sauvent ainsi la vie, la paix sera faite et l'union sera vite conclue. Nous pénétrerons en Afrique comme nous voudrions, sans avoir rien à craindre, escortés, au contraire, par ces convoyeurs amis, et l'alliance Franco-Islamique se fera d'elle-même, de peuple à peuple, voire par-dessus la tête, s'il le fallait, des Gouvernements.

Résultats de l'Alliance Franco-Islamique.

Or, l'alliance faite, c'est la ruine de l'Angleterre, c'est la chute de sa prépondérance et la fin de l'oppression universelle par la haute finance.

Si l'alliance Franco-Islamique est obligée de faire la guerre, elle n'aura qu'à se souvenir en effet que, dans les Indes Anglaises seules, il y a 40,000,000 de Musulmans, tandis qu'il n'y a que 60,000 soldats Anglais. Que chaque Musulman jette seulement une pierre et le soir du même jour, l'armée Anglaise aura disparu sous une montagne.

J'ai connu, continue M. de Morès, un des Touaregs qui prirent part à la lutte contre la colonne de Hicks Pacha. Il racontait que ses compagnons n'étaient armés que de lances. Longtemps ils suivirent de loin, en silence, la colonne ennemie; ils l'entourèrent sans qu'elle pût même s'en douter. Puis, une nuit, le signal fut donné; les Touaregs fondirent sur le camp endormi: tout fut tué, jusqu'au dernier homme, et le lendemain, quand l'aurore se leva, il ne restait plus rien des ennemis; la mer humaine avait passé.

En ce moment, les Derviches luttent pour la liberté. Ils ont de l'or, ils ont le nombre, ils ont des armes. Il ne leur manque que quelques officiers pour les guider et les conduire. Eh bien, que le cri de l'alliance Franco-Islamique retentisse de Dunkerque aux vallées du Haut-Nil et l'on verra s'il ne se trouve pas des officiers prêts à aller là-bas, pour que le jour où les bataillons se rencontreront, quand l'Anglais criera: "Qui vive!" on lui réponde: "France et liberté."

En temps de paix, même, l'alliance Franco-Islamique peut battre en brèche, d'une façon terrible, l'Angleterre et la finance, en mettant son commerce en quarantaine.

Que le Soudan n'accepte plus ni marchandises ni caravanes autres que celles de l'alliance, qu'il rejette impitoyablement et ferme ses débouchés à tout ce qui lui envoie l'Angleterre, et l'on verra promptement l'Espagne, l'Italie, l'Allemagne, elle-même, se liguier contre le léopard maudit et se tourner du côté où seront leurs véritables intérêts.

Ordre du Jour et Conclusion.

Maintenant assez de paroles; des actes.

Par-dessus les Gouvernements, il y a les peuples. Il faut donc, nous, peuples, conclure d'abord cette alliance; il faut la préconiser, l'imposer, les Gouvernements suivront.

C'est dans cette pensée que l'ordre du jour suivant est proposé:—

"Les Français, les Musulmans, les Méditerranéens réunis à Tunis au nombre de 2,000, acclament l'alliance des Français et des Musulmans, ainsi que l'union des riverains de la Méditerranée pour défendre les principes de l'autonomie et des alliances et délivrer la terre et l'humanité du joug de la finance dont les Anglais sont aujourd'hui, à travers le monde, les Agents Politiques. L'assemblée envoie aux Musulmans, qui combattent sur les bords du Nil, sa sympathie et ses vœux."

Cet ordre du jour a été communiqué par dépêche à M. le Président de la République Française; à M. Bourgeois, Président du Conseil; à Sa Majesté le Sultan; à son Excellence M. de Mohrenheim; à M. le Marquis de Salisbury, Premier Ministre Sa Majesté Britannique; à la Chambre de Commerce de Marseilles, et au Colonel Prince de Polignac, à Alger.

Nous ne discuterons nullement ici les différentes idées présentées par M. de Morès et que nous venons de résumer imparfaitement.

Constatons, seulement, en terminant, qu'à maintes reprises, sa parole a été couverte des plus enthousiastes applaudissements.

Inclosure 2 in No. 11*.

Extract from the "Protectorat" of April 2, 1896.

CONFÉRENCE DU MARQUIS DE MORÈS.

C'EST devant une salle comble (plus de 500 personnes n'avaient pu trouver place) que M. de Morès a donné, Dimanche soir, sa conférence.

A maintes reprises, des applaudissements enthousiastes ont accueilli la parole enflammée de l'orateur.

Vieux Parisien, il y a longtemps que je connais, estime et aime la si intéressante figure de Morès. Qu'il soit loué d'avoir secoué sur Tunis le clair flambeau des idées généreuses!

Apôtre indépendant, il marche à travers le monde comme le Juif errant . . . ou plutôt comme l'anti-Juif errant.

Je dois dire que, sinon de façon très indirecte, il n'a pas été question, Dimanche, des Israélites. C'est contre l'Angleterre, contre "le léopard maudit" que M. de Morès a déployé toute sa verve indignée.

La "Dépêche" a résumé cette brillante causerie où abondaient les mots heureux:—

"Aux Indes Anglaise," a dit l'orateur, "il y a 40,000,000 de Musulmans et 60,000 soldats Anglais. Que chaque Musulman jette une pierre, et l'armée Anglaise disparaîtra sous une montagne."

Ce que je veux retenir avant tout, ce sont les idées fécondes, humanitaires et très pratiques, en somme, émises par le Marquis de Morès sur l'alliance Franco-Islamique. Il a exposé, de façon sommaire, mais fort nette, non au point de vue religieux et philosophique, comme M. Loyson, mais au point de vue de la prospérité de la France et des peuples Méditerranéens, combien il importe de traiter les Mahométans en égaux et en alliés, et, renonçant au régime du sabre, de rouvrir les anciennes routes de caravanes vers le centre de l'Afrique.

Et qu'on ne l'accuse pas d'être un théoricien et un rêveur. Il vient de chez les Touaregs; il va chez les Derviches du Nil.

M. René Millet doit être loué d'avoir manifesté ouvertement sa sympathie à ce vaillant pionnier du progrès. Puissent nos gouvernants imiter son exemple!

No. 12.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Sir Clare Ford.

(No. 46. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, April 16, 1896.

THE Italian Ambassador called at this office on the 31st ultimo, and stated that the resignation of M. Berthelot, the attitude of M. Bourgeois, and several other circumstances induced his Government to believe that there must be some foundation for the suspicion of possible action of France in Tripoli as a set off against the Egyptian advance in the Nile Valley.

Some expressions let fall by M. Billot as to the danger of fanatical excitement being aroused in Tripoli, Tunis, and Algeria by the news of the Egyptian expedition, tended to confirm these apprehensions.

General Ferrero said he was instructed to inquire whether these views were shared by Her Majesty's Government, and, if so, he was to draw attention to the very serious consequences which would result from any action of the kind by France.

His Excellency has been informed that the information in the possession of Her Majesty's Government all points to the improbability of any such designs being at present contemplated by the French Government, and his attention was particularly drawn to the speech made by M. Bourgeois in the French Chamber of Deputies on the 2nd instant, in which great stress was laid on the maintenance of the integrity of the Turkish Empire.

In reply to his inquiries as to the view which Her Majesty's Government would take of such designs, I have informed General Ferrero that Her Majesty's Government were strongly opposed to any French advance on Tripoli, but that on this, as on other questions connected with the maintenance of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean, the course which Her Majesty's Government would think it right to take in any contingency could not be decided until the contingency arose.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 13.

Sir Clare Ford to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 21.)

(No. 93.)

My Lord,

Rome, April 18, 1896.

THE question of Tripoli, whenever it forms the subject of comments in the Italian press, is always certain to attract attention in this country, and although the mention of it made in the columns of the "Messagero" of this morning may not be of great importance, still I think it well to bring it to your Lordship's notice.

I have, therefore, the honour to inclose herein an extract, together with a précis of it, from that paper, which makes allusion to a telegram dated yesterday from Constantinople reporting a conflict which is said to have taken place on the Tripoli frontier between some Spahi troops and the natives of that region, and also contains remarks made on the subject by certain French newspapers.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS CLARE FORD.

Inclosure in No. 13.

Précis of an Article in the "Messagero" of April 18, 1896.

THE Stefani Agency telegraphs from Constantinople on the 17th April that a conflict had taken place between Spahis and people of Tripoli, and that ten of the latter had been killed and six of the former.

The "Matin," of Paris, reporting this news, remarks that it is serious, as it may lead to reprisals, which might compel France to adopt energetic resolutions.

The Paris correspondent of the "Messagero" reports that few newspapers make any comments on this news, but the "Patrie" says, "The campaign undertaken by the English against the Dervishes begins to bear its fruits."

"The Mussulman populations of Africa, not so credulous as European nations, know that if the conquest of the Soudan is undertaken, a religious war will be started, not only against the English, but against all Giaours.

"It is easily understood that at the present moment the greatest excitement exists in Central Africa. Reports have been received of unusual movements among the tribes of South Morocco, South Oran, and as far as the Touaregs.

"And now comes the news of the greatest importance that a conflict, of which few details are given, has taken place between tribes of Tripoli and Spahis on the frontiers of Tripoli and Tunis.

"And here we have the beginning of the great conflagration which is inevitable.

"This incident will necessarily call for our intervention in Tripoli; there will be loud outcries in Italy, but all we can do is to direct them against England, the original author of all the mischief."

The "Jour" warns its readers against believing all the false reports which are current in the press that France, in conjunction with Russia, contemplates an advance on Tripoli.

A telegram was received in Paris that the French military authorities on the 16th visited the country of Ksours to the south of Gabes to inspect the villages, and to see that they were in a position to defend themselves against a possible attack from the Touaregs. In the evening the military authorities returned to Sfax.

No. 14.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received April 27.)

(No. 9.)

My Lord,

Tunis, April 7, 1896.

THE various papers here have published a telegram reporting that Mr. Baring was going to ask a question in the House of Commons with reference to the terms on which France is in occupation of Tunis.

The "Unione," the Italian paper, has called attention to this fact, that the French are, by the terms of their Treaty with the Bey, bound to evacuate Tunis as soon as order is restored (a clause which, by the way, it is now the custom to omit in French published copies of that Treaty); and that, consequently, the duty incumbent on France with reference to Tunis is very much stronger than is that which results on our declaration with reference to Egypt.

In one of its latest numbers the "Unione" publishes the text of the protest addressed by the Sublime Porte to the Powers in 1881 against the French occupation; and I have the honour to inclose a copy and translation of the remarks prefacing that publication, and the text of that note as given by the "Unione."

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 14.

Extract from the "Unione."

THE Honourable Baring has expressed his intention of putting a question in the House of Commons with the object of learning, amongst other things, whether Tunis is subject to the sovereignty of the Sublime Porte.

The tribute paid to the Sultan by the Regency up to the time of the temporary French occupation proves it, as also the following note sent by Turkey to the Powers of Europe:—

"Constantinople, le 16 Mai, 1881.

"Nous n'avons point manqué, à l'occasion des événements qui viennent de se produire en Tunisie, de signaler, à plusieurs reprises, à l'attention sérieuse des Gouvernements Signataires du Traité de Berlin, les droits souverains, pleins et entiers de la Sublime Porte sur cette province, partie intégrante de l'Empire, droits établis *ab antiquo*, exercés par ce dernier sans interruption jusqu'à ce jour et reconnus par les Puissances en général.

"Nous n'avons pas manqué non plus, aussi bien avant qu'après l'entrée des troupes

Françaises en Tunisie, de proposer une entente amiable entre la Sublime Porte et la Gouvernement de la République, en vue de concilier nos droits avec les intérêts de la France, et de satisfaire ainsi aux plaintes formulées par celle-ci contre les incursions que les autorités Tunisiennes s'étaient, dès l'origine du conflit, déclarées prêtes à réprimer dans le plus bref délai.

"De leur côté, le Pacha de Tunis et la population confiée par Firman Impérial à son administration ont fait appel, comme il était de leur devoir à le faire, à la Cour souveraine, pour lui exposer la situation critique où ils se trouvaient, en présence de la marche en avant des troupes Françaises dans le pays, et pour lui demander instamment de leur venir en aide en sa qualité de leur maître légitime.

"Nos propositions éminemment conciliantes et les preuves irréfutables que nous avons présentées à l'appui de nos droits en question n'ont point été entendues, et même le Gouvernement de la République a cru devoir décliner l'existence de tous les liens du sujétion séculaire qui unissent cette province à l'Empire, en mettant en avant la soi-disant indépendance de ce pays, et passer ainsi outre à toutes nos objections, malgré même les protestations du Gouvernement Général et de la population, en occupant successivement la plus grande partie du territoire de Tunis, et nous défendant en dernier lieu, d'une manière péremptoire et menaçante, l'envoi d'un seul de nos bâtiments sur les lieux.

"Comme complément à cette manière de procéder, que nous ne saurions nous empêcher, à notre regret, de considérer comme étant absolument contraire aux obligations internationales, le Gouvernement de la République vient de présenter aux Chambres Françaises le Traité qu'il a conclu le 13 de ce mois avec Son Altesse le Pacha de Tunis, Traité auquel celui-ci a dû finalement se soumettre, en présence de la pression exercée sur le pays et du danger imminent qui le menaçait.

"Nous devons à nous-mêmes, et à nos devoirs envers le pays, de récuser ce document, dont toutes les clauses renversent l'ordre légitime des choses établi en Tunisie et portent la plus grave atteinte à la souveraineté et l'intégrité de l'Empire, garanties par les Traités.

"En conséquence, la Sublime Porte se fait un devoir de protester énergiquement, et de la manière la plus solennelle, contre la validité de ce Traité, le déclarant conclu dans des conditions anormales et attentatoires aux droits du Sultan et, dès lors, comme n'ayant à ses yeux et à ceux de Son Altesse le Pacha et de la population Tunisienne, sujets de Sa Majesté Impériale, aucune valeur ni force de loi, tant dans son ensemble que dans chacune de ses parties.

"Je vous invite à communiquer officiellement, et sans le moindre retard, la présente dépêche protestative à son Excellence le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères."

No. 15.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 11.)

My Lord,

Tunis, April 19, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose you a copy of a letter from Mr. Sloane Stanley, complaining of having been stopped on a shooting expedition which he lately undertook in the south of the Regency, and of the suffering to which he was thereby subjected.

When the circumstances occurred, he telegraphed informing this Consulate-General of the fact, and, I being absent on my recent tour of inspection, Her Majesty's Vice-Consul complained to the Residency, when he was informed that this rule had lately been made in the interests of the safety of the traveller.

This excuse is quite trivial. I was myself last year all through the country Mr. Sloane Stanley wished to traverse, and met the hired collector he mentions, who was travelling about for months unaccompanied save by a native servant.

The places which Mr. Sloane Stanley was going to visit are indeed as quiet as any other part of the Regency. The reason, therefore, for the action of the French authorities must be looked for elsewhere, and it would look as if it were possible that there may be something in the statements in the French papers as to the movements on the frontier, and preparations may be going on in the south which they do not wish foreign eyes to notice.

In view of the fact that the action of the Tunisian Government in this matter is

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directly opposed to Article V of our Treaty of 1875, which states that British subjects "shall be free to travel or reside in any part of the Regency without hindrance or molestation," I have thought it better to report the matter to your Lordship, specially in view of the result of Mr. Profeit's unofficial representation.

It would seem that even if the reason given by the Residency were valid, the course followed by their authorities towards Mr. Sloane Stanley was scarcely the correct one for them to adopt, as the same Article of our Treaty states that the Bey "engages to protect British subjects who may come to this country either for the purposes of trade or for travelling," and this protection could easily have been afforded by furnishing him with an escort.

Mr. Sloane Stanley, whom I have seen, tells me that, though not absolutely insulting, the officer who turned them back was far from courteous in his manner in carrying out his instructions, although no opposition was offered to them by himself or his party.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 15.

Mr. Sloane Stanley to Consul-General Haggard.

Sir,

Tunis, April 19, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to thank you for the letter you obtained for me from the French Residency, recommending me to the authorities in the south of the Regency.

I have at the same time to inform you that notwithstanding this letter, as we were proceeding from Gabes to Matmata we were stopped on the way by the Lieutenant stationed at Matmata, who inquired where we were going; we said we intended to pass by Birzoumit, Birzouttan, and Douz, and so on to Kebili.

This route was chosen on account of the water being good. The Lieutenant replied that we must not pass beyond Tamegeret in spite of showing the letter of recommendation; he added that if we went to those places already mentioned, he would send soldiers to bring us back. We consequently obeyed his orders, lost our trip, and underwent considerable privation and suffering from want of water.

I think it right that I should bring these facts to your notice, and when I started on my journey I had been under the impression that British subjects could travel in the interior of the Regency without molestation.

I would venture to point out that should the Beylical authorities assert that the measure from which my party suffered was taken in the interest of our safety, the country which we purposed to traverse was perfectly secure, having lately been inhabited for several months by an English ornithologist, and that it was several days' march from the frontier.

I have, &c.
(Signed) CYRIL SLOANE STANLEY.

P.S.—I may add that no reason was given by the officer for stopping us.
C. S. S.

No. 16.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15, 1896.)

(No. 12.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 15, 1896.

I HAD hardly written my immediately preceding despatch when the Italian Agent and Consul-General informed me that he had just heard from his colleague at Tripoli that a body of French Spahis had made an incursion to Nalout, which is, as will be seen from the map, well inside Tripolitan territory, ravaging the country and destroying the crops.

On being resisted by the Tripolitan inhabitants an encounter took place, which

resulted in a loss of about ten men to the defenders, and about half that number to the invaders.

It would appear, therefore, that if this news be correct, notwithstanding M. Révoil's disclaimer, which I had the honour of reporting in my despatch No. 6A, Africa, of the 27th ultimo, there is a renewal of aggressive activity on the part of the French on the Tripolitan frontier, which may account for the precaution taken to keep travellers at a distance, which I have reported in my immediately preceding despatch.

It is, of course, likely that the French may represent their action as taken as a measure of reprisal for some Tripolitan raid, but this occurrence would seem to chime in with the rumours which have been current and the statements which have been made lately in the French newspapers as to the renewal of action in that direction, as also with the Resident's declaration last year to a frontier officer, "Le plus loin que vous poussez, le plus je vous conviendrai," and it is possible, in view of our action in the Soudan and that of Italy in Abyssinia, the French may think that they ought to make at least a demonstration of activity themselves.

I have learnt that lately the French have established fresh posts on the frontier, each of them occupied by a detachment of Spahis sufficient to keep up a ferment on the frontier.

I regret to say that this Consulate-General has but small means of gaining any reliable information as to those regions at this moment. The Consular Agent at Gabes is, as I ascertained on my recent journey, absolutely incompetent, and there is a difficulty in getting any one to replace him. M. Pariente, the Consular Agent at Djerba, an active and intelligent man, is away at Malta ill. Practically, therefore, my only direct source of information is Mr. Galea, the Vice-Consul at Susa, who is far from the scene of action. He goes sometimes to Gabes, where he has property, and it is only on these occasions that I can hope to have any direct reliable information of events in the south.

Might I venture to suggest that under these circumstances it might be useful if Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli were instructed to keep me informed of any movements on the frontier of which he may become aware? I, on my side, would keep him informed of anything which might possibly come to my knowledge which might be of interest.

On the receipt of this news from Tripoli my Italian colleague telegraphed to his Agent at Gabes inquiring whether he had heard any confirmation of the rumour. He has just informed me that he has received a reply in the negative. I have not yet received an answer to a telegram I have myself dispatched to Mr. Galea inquiring on the subject.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S.—April 21. I have the honour to inform your Lordship, with reference to my remarks in the above despatch, that this day the semi-official "Dépêche Tunisienne," announces that "in view of possible events in the Soudan, where the news of the English attack on the Dervishes has been rapidly spread, and with the object of protecting us from the nomad populations in Central Africa in a relative proximity to our possessions, orders have been sent to renew and augment the provisioning and armament of our posts in the extreme South of Algiers and Tunis, as also on the Congo and at Timbuctoo, and generally in all posts on the African coast and those of the Indian Ocean. French war-vessels have already gone to sea, and others will soon start or leave their present positions so as to be nearer to the different points of supply and of observation on the African coasts.

W. H. D. H.

No. 17.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 11.)

(No. 13. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, April 22, 1896.

IN my immediately preceding despatch I ventured to suggest it as possible that the French version of the raid into Tripolitan territory might have a different colouring to that given it by the Italian Consul-General, and this surmise was proved correct by

a conversation which I had this morning with the First Secretary to the French Residency.

He told me that a Tripolitan tribe, having sown some land 40 kilom. inside the Tunisian frontier in the direction of Teherbat, had refused to pay the usual tax, so that when, about a fortnight ago, they went to harvest it, a party of Spahis was sent to exact the tax. The Tripolitans then formed an ambushade near a well, and suddenly opened fire on the Spahis whilst they were watering their horses, of whom three were killed at the first discharge, while two of the Spahis were wounded. On the latter returning the fire and killing a few of the Tripolitans, they took to flight.

The only remark that suggests itself to me with reference to this version, is that there must be an almost miraculously early harvest on the Tripolitan frontier, specially in view of the unusual lateness of the season this year, which is universal in the Regency, but specially marked in the south. Harvest will not begin here for another month, though this district is much more forward than in the south.

When I was in those regions about six weeks ago, in practically the same latitude as the district where this remarkably early crop was to have been harvested a fortnight back, most of the land was not even sown, and the necessary rains did not come till a week or two afterwards.

It is, in fact, apparently the old story, which was so well exemplified on the Algerian-Tunisian frontier fifteen years back—the lamb is troubling the wolf's drinking water.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 18.

Sir Clare Ford to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 14.)

(No. 110.)

My Lord,

Rome, May 10, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that, at the sitting held by the Chamber of Deputies yesterday, the Duke of Sermoneta, Minister for Foreign Affairs, stated, in reply to an interpellation which had been addressed to him on the condition of affairs in Tripoli, that no change prejudicial to Italian interests had occurred there, and that the incidents which had been reported as having taken place on the Tripoli-Tunisian frontier had been greatly exaggerated.

His Excellency also stated that he had received formal assurances from the French Government that they had no intention of inaugurating an adventurous policy in that part of the world, and he concluded his reply by stating that the Italian Government would never tolerate any disturbance of the *status quo* in the Mediterranean which might be injurious to Italy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) FRANCIS CLARE FORD.

No. 19.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 15.)

(No. 156.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, May 15, 1896, 11.45 A.M.

THE Sublime Porte is informed by the Vali of Tripoli that two French travellers have set out with an escort of twenty-five men and eighty loaded camels from Algeria and Alhara for Elbirat, a place ten days westward of Ghadamis.

The expedition, the Vali reports, will proceed to the Ezember Tuarty territory, and thence to the Soudan. Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli has been instructed to report.

No. 20.

Sir P. Currie to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 17.)

(No. 158.)

(Telegraphic.) P.

Constantinople, May 16, 1896, 11.40 A.M.

MY telegram No. 156 of the 15th instant.

The British Consul at Tripoli has telegraphed that last February news was received at Ghadamis of the arrival from Algeria of a caravan at Elbirat, which is at ten days' distance, in charge of two Frenchmen, with eighty loaded camels and twenty-five dromedaries, of the Wargla-Algeria tribe, and that it intended to proceed via the Ezger-Tuarez country to the Soudan.

No. 21.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received May 25.)

(No. 14.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 16, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that on the 13th instant the French Mediterranean fleet, under Admiral Gervais, arrived at Bizerta.

It having been stated that it would pass through the canal into the upper lake, I considered that it would be interesting to be there on the first occasion of such an undertaking, specially as doubts have been expressed as to the depth of the canal being sufficient for the passage of the largest iron-clads.

On arriving in double line at the port, ten torpedo-boats, five large and five small, the "Wattignies," the "General Chanzy," and "Troude," and the torpedo-catchers, "d'Iberville" and "Léger," passed through the canal, the last-named going through the fishery into the upper lake.

The rest of the fleet—six iron-clads—remained outside, and at night went through the exercise of protecting the entry from attack, firing shot or shell.

Early next morning, while four iron-clads still remained outside, the "Brennus" and the "Formidable" passed the canal, the "Formidable" remaining in the outer lake, while the former joined the "Léger" in the centre of the inner lake.

No accident, as far as I could ascertain, attended this operation, and thus has been finally set at rest the vexed question of the possibility or the contrary of using Bizerta as a naval port.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 22.

The Marquess of Salisbury to the Marquess of Dufferin.

(No. 181.)

My Lord,

Foreign Office, May 27, 1896.

I TRANSMIT to your Excellency herewith copy of a despatch which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tunis,* reporting that a British traveller had been prevented by the French authorities from travelling in certain districts in the south of the Regency.

It seems doubtful whether any useful result would be obtained by bringing the case to the notice of the French Government, but you are at liberty to use your discretion in the matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 23.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Consul-General Haggard.

(No. 2.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, May 28, 1896.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 12 of the 20th ultimo respecting French aggression on Tripolitan territory.

I concur in your suggestion, that Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli should keep you informed of any movements on the Tunis-Tripoli frontier of which he may become aware, and you should arrange with Mr. Jago accordingly.

I am, &c.

(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 24.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 1.)

(No. 15. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 19, 1896.

THE Italian Agent and Consul-General called upon me yesterday and read me the Report from his Agent at Gabès, of which he was subsequently good enough to give me a French translation, a copy of which is inclosed herewith.

The Marquis de Morès alluded to therein is the gentleman who made the violent attack on England here in Tunis which I had the honour to report to your Lordship in my despatch No. 7 of the 2nd April last. His present programme differs somewhat from the intentions which he announced here of proceeding to the Egyptian Soudan to help the Dervishes against the English, but his animosity towards England appears to be as active as ever, and he still announces publicly that the ulterior object of his present journey is to injure us.

This avowal has, however, according to the inclosed Report, not deprived him of the sympathy of the French authorities.

As a matter of fact—as I have shown in previous despatches of the Commercial series—it is probable that, supposing that the primary object of his journey is, as he now declares, to open commercial relations with the Tuaregs and other tribes in the "Hinterland," the result of his success in so doing would, far from injuring us, be all to our advantage—so long as our present Treaty with Tunis holds good, as he will thereby clear the way for our Manchester goods to be passed through Tunis into the vast regions to the south.

It is, however, to be feared that M. de Morès is somewhat too sanguine, and that he may find the Tuaregs' country a very hard nut to crack. He may possibly even meet with a check at the very threshold,—Ghadames,—as, so far, no French Agent has ever been allowed to enter that town openly; the only one, as far as I am aware, who succeeded in getting in at all being, as he told me, and as I had the honour of reporting in my despatch No. 18 of the 20th March last year, taken in chains thence to Tripoli.

In any case, M. de Morès' plans must take some time to carry out, especially as he has hardly chosen the best time of year to begin his journey; it would, indeed, from this fact almost seem possible that he does not expect, nor perhaps even intend, to go very far to the south-west. He is in any case no novice, and probably knows very well what he has before him.

It is interesting to note that the country which M. de Morès is going to traverse on first leaving Gabès, with the countenance, if not with the actual assistance, of the French authorities, is that road to Kebilli which they pronounced too dangerous for Mr. Sloane Stanley—as I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 11 of the 19th April—but then Mr. Sloane Stanley is an Englishman who wished to kill a mouflon. M. de Morès is a renegade Italian who wishes to injure England, which makes all the difference in French eyes in the danger of travelling through the district.

Having received no Report on the subject from the British Consular Agent at Gabès, I telegraphed to the British Vice-Consul at Susa, who had announced to me

his departure for Gabès. He had not yet arrived there, and the telegram was decyphered and answered by Mr. Callija, whose reply I have the honour to inclose.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S.—Of course, after all, the intention that M. de Morès at present proclaims may be a blind, and he may, after all, be going to try to carry out that to which he gave utterance here of getting through to the Upper Nile to help the Dervishes, and it may be also possible that he may have had a hint from the French authorities that, were he to start on such an avowed filibustering expedition, it would be difficult for the officers of a Power, ostensibly friendly to England, to help him, as they appear to have been doing, or even to let him pass.

W. H. D. H.

Inclosure 1 in No. 24.

Report by the Italian Consular Agent at Gabès.

LE Marquis de Morès est arrivé à Gabès le Samedi, 9 courant, avec sa suite, les armes, les munitions, les cadeaux nécessaires pour le long voyage, qu'il a l'intention d'entreprendre dans l'intérieur de l'Afrique.

Il est accompagné par quelques individus, tous Africains, savoir: trois nègres Soudanais, un Tripolitain, un natif de l'Oasis de Ghadamès, un Tunisien relativement jeune décoré du Nicham Ifthakar, et appartenant, dit-on, à une riche famille indigène. Le but du voyage serait, d'après ce qu'ils affirment, de pousser au développement de l'influence commerciale de la France, et des autres pays Latins, et de contrecarrer le commerce et l'influence Anglaise.

Le Marquis de Morès, appuyé autant que possible par les autorités Franco-Tunisiennes, doit avoir quitté Gabès avec une caravane composée de quarante ou cinquante chameaux se dirigeant à Kebilli d'où sans pénétrer précisément en Algérie, il tournera vers le sud-ouest par l'Ouadi sauf et poussera jusqu'à Ghadamès. De là il trouvera le terrain plus ou moins favorable à l'exécution de ses projets d'induire les Chefs de tribus à donner la préférence aux produits de l'industrie Française, à signer des Traités de Commerce et d'Amitié pour la protection des caravanes portant des marchandises Françaises en échange de garanties sérieuses assurant l'indépendance de ces populations. Par conséquent, il paraît qu'au lieu de se diriger vers le midi et les régions habitées par les Derviches il prendra la route de l'occident et de la Mer Atlantique par la Vallée du Congo.

Dans la Conférence qu'il a tenue le 14 Mai, M. de Morès a prétendu que son expédition n'est que l'avant-garde d'autres bien plus importantes qu'on prépare en France dans le même but, et qui prendront d'autres routes, y comprise celle par la Mer Rouge et le Golfe d'Aden, pénétrant dans les régions soumises à l'influence de l'Angleterre pour exciter toutes les peuplades qui ne se sont pas encore prononcées ouvertement contre cette nation, et n'ont pas encore entrepris de la combattre par tous les moyens dont elles disposent.

Bref, il a répété ce qu'il avait déjà dit à Tunis sur la nécessité d'une coalition pour combattre l'Angleterre sur le terrain des luttes pacifiques et aux besoins militaires et ouvrir ainsi des débouchés aux industries d'autres nations.

Gabès, le 15 Mai, 1896.

Inclosure 2 in No. 24.

Mr. Callija to Consul-General Haggard.

(Telegraphic.)

Gabès, May 18, 1896.

"GALEA" expected the day after to-morrow. Marquis declares publicly intention to proceed to Soudan own expense. He is with forty camel-loads more than half-way to Kebilli. All authorities appear to be assisting.

No. 25.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 1.)

(No. 16. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 21, 1896.

IN my despatch No. 14 of the 16th instant, I had the honour of reporting the entrance of the French fleet into the harbour of Bizerta, and of mentioning that some of the ships passed through into the inner lake.

The Honourable Terence Bourke, the British Consular Agent there, has informed me that by one of the clauses of their Agreement with the Tunisian Government, the Port Company have the right to prevent any ship or boat passing through the opening of their fisheries into the inner lake, or even any boat from being used on its surface.

It is, of course, doubtful whether such a privilege could be legally sustained if any of the riparian owners or others were to think it worth while to contest the point, but, meanwhile, it is so severely exercised that there is not a single boat afloat on the inner lake.

When I was at Malta the Commander-in-chief in the Mediterranean told me that he should very possibly pay the Tunisian coast a visit with the fleet this summer, and the doubts which he at the same time expressed as to the depth of water in the Canal being sufficient to admit his largest iron-clads being now set at rest by the entry of the French fleet, he will, if he visits Bizerta, probably wish to follow their example by going into the upper lake.

I was not aware of this prohibition when I paid Bizerta a visit in Her Majesty's ship "Fearless" in the spring. The officials of the Port Company then demurred to my suggestion that we should go through their fishery barrier, and I, thinking that this was probably owing to the fact that the operation of removing it might be difficult and possibly expensive, did not at all press the point. The other day, however, I examined the machinery, and found that the net in the middle can be lowered and raised without any difficulty in a few minutes, so it is clear that some other reason must be sought for this evident reluctance to let us pass. On my alluding to the matter the other day, also before I was aware of the prohibition, the director of the works said that the machinery was out of repair at the time. This is, of course, possible, but if it be true, it is odd that he had not given this excuse when I made the suggestion.

It would appear, therefore, possible that if the Mediterranean fleet go to Bizerta and wish to enter the inner port, the authorities of the Company may decline to allow the ships to do so.

Now the question arises—apart from the doubtful validity of the clause in the Agreement—would the Company, having admitted the French fleet, have the right to exclude that of any other nation?

As your Lordship is aware from reports from this Consulate-General, the land for the construction of an arsenal has already been expropriated by the military authorities on the shore of the inner lake. It is clear, therefore, that in the future it is intended to constitute Bizerta a naval port, and if the Company maintain their claim to let through only such ships as they choose, they can thus limit its use to French ships, thus making Bizerta, with the exception of the small artificial outer harbour and the comparatively small outer lake a *mare clausum* for French ships. It is evident also that by so doing they would give the French authorities the means of evading responsibility by enabling them to plead that an Agreement between a Company and the Beylical Government was no affair of theirs, and that they had no power to coerce that Company.

I have thought it best, in view of the possible visit of the Mediterranean fleet, to put these facts before your Lordship, so as to avoid the possibility of an unexpected refusal on the part of the Port Company to allow the fleet to pass their barrier, causing a misunderstanding which might be awkward, and also in case your Lordship should wish either to ascertain or define our exact position in the matter, or to let Sir M. Culme-Seymour know the circumstances before he arrives, or both.

It would, of course, have been easy for me to ascertain whether, in the event of this visit, the fleet would or would not be admitted into the inner lake, but I have

thought that your Lordship might possibly consider it desirable that I should not broach the subject at all without instructions.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 26.

Consul-General Jago to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 6.)

(No. 1.)

My Lord,

Tripoli, May 30, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to transmit, for your Lordship's information, a copy of a despatch which I have this day addressed to Her Majesty's Chargé d'Affaires at Constantinople on the public affairs of this province.

I have, &c.
(Signed) THOS. S. JAGO.

Inclosure in No. 26.

Consul-General Jago to Mr. Herbert.

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Tripoli, May 30, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to report, for your information, the present state of affairs in the Province of Tripoli.

Ahmed Rassim Pasha, the present Governor-General, a man of 75 years of age, of large private means, a Greek by his mother's side, a connection by marriage of the late Midhat Pasha, and of thorough incorruptibility of character, has of late become so ill through age and infirmity that in the ordinary course of nature a successor will soon have to be appointed. During his continuous residence here of fifteen years the Sultan has persistently declined to grant him even a short leave of absence for recruitment of health, on the plea that no fit person can be found to replace him, and has appealed to his patriotism to remain at his post. As a last appeal, a certificate, signed by seven local doctors, goes by this post to Constantinople, showing the imperative necessity of change of air and perfect rest. Under present circumstances, his Excellency is obliged to keep his private apartments for six months at a time, and is at present totally incapacitated from attending to public business. He has merited the highest gratitude of the Sultan by the tact and zeal he has displayed in defence of Turkish interests, especially in the many delicate questions which have often arisen with the French and Italian Agents here.

As you are aware, the attempt made in 1891 to fix the proper frontiers between Tripoli and Tunis by the efforts of a joint Turkish and Tunisian Commission failed in its object, and the matter remains in abeyance, always a fertile source of irritation and danger.

Owing to the friendly relations existing between the Governor-General and my French colleague, the disputed territory has of late years been considered in the light of a neutral zone pending further negotiations for a final settlement, and in consequence of this tacit understanding petty Tripolitan frontier complaints have been referred for inquiry and redress to the French Resident at Tunis, and those of Tunisian origin to the Governor-General here.

This plan has so far worked well, but in April last a portion of the Werghumma, a powerful semi-independent Tunisian frontier tribe, crossed into Turkish territory (not in the disputed zone) near Naloot and Wazzin, and, pasturing their animals in the corn-fields, came into collision with the villagers, resulting in seven of the latter being killed and one or two of the former.

So far, no redress has been given, and the Tripoli tribes, who have been with difficulty restrained by the Governor-General, vow they will take their revenge after harvest.

The Governor-General has complained to me bitterly of the unjust conduct of the French authorities in Tunis in supporting their own officials, whether acting rightly or wrongly, on every occasion, and in requiring the complainants to go to Tunis and prove their titles to their villages before the Resident there.

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The matter is now engaging the attention of the French and Turkish Governments, the more so, as certain Spahis, or irregular Tunisian frontier guards, are said to have accompanied the Werghumma.

My Italian colleague having represented the matter to Rome, the French Government have, I believe, disavowed any intention of interfering with the integrity of this province as Ottoman territory.

Financially speaking, the state of this province cannot possibly be worse. No salaries have been paid to the civil and military servants for upwards of ten months. Constantinople sends no financial aid, and the Governor-General is obliged to pledge his personal credit to the contractors, to whom large arrears are owing, to furnish food to the 10,000 to 12,000 troops here from day to day. Happily, the harvests are abundant, and some slight relief will be afforded when the tithes are paid.

I have, &c.
(Signed) THOS. S. JAGO.

P.S. May 31.—News has just arrived that five days ago a serious collision took place on alleged Turkish territory in the Sian district to the north of Naloot between the Sian (Tripolitan tribe) and Tunisian Spahis, resulting in four of the principal Sian Sheikhs being killed and many wounded. Details are wanting.

T. S. J.

No. 27.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 18. Confidential.)

My Lord,

I HAVE the honour to inclose a cutting from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" with reference to a journey which a M. de Béhagle proposes to take to the Soudan with the object of starting a trade route from the interior to the Mediterranean coast.

My Austrian colleague also informs me that a Marquis de Puissaye called on him lately to inquire the price per thousand of the Maria Theresa dollar, which is, it appears, the current coin in these regions, stating that he wanted them for the expenses of a journey that he proposed to take into the interior; so it would seem that, in addition to M. de Morès' expedition, two others are in contemplation.

It is possible that the recently-appointed Director of Agriculture, M. de Dysbowski, may not be entirely stranger to the present unusual activity in the direction I have indicated, as he was previously employed by the French Government on a combined military and commercial mission to Lake Tchad to avenge the alleged murder of M. Crampel, and is known to continue to take a great interest in French enterprise in the interior of Africa.

The Italian Agent and Consul-General tells me that he has heard from his colleague at Tripoli that the Vali had informed him that he had had no authority to allow M. de Morès to enter Ghadamès, and that it was likely that he might only skirt that town, thus following the example of another French emissary, apparently a forerunner of M. de Morès, who passed that way some time back.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 27.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of May 29, 1896.

LE voyage que M. F. de Béhagle va entreprendre dans le Soudan est patronné par la Société Africaine de France.

Cette Société a des attaches Tunisiennes considérables; nous nommions dernièrement M. P. Bonnard, son distingué Secrétaire-Général; nous devons aussi citer M. Abel Couvreur, l'un des créateurs du port de Bizerte. Les nommer, c'est dire combien l'étude des questions qui intéressent l'Afrique Méditerranéenne attire la préférence de la Société.

Aussi le projet de M. de Béhagle lui fut-il immédiatement sympathique, car il débutait par les mots suivants:—

"Mon but: Prouver qu'une tonne de marchandise prise sur la ligne de partage des eaux des Bassins du Tchad et du Congo peut, même à l'heure actuelle, arriver à la Méditerranée à meilleur marché qu'à l'océan."

"Conclusion: le Chemin de Fer trans-Saharien qui se dirigera de la Méditerranée vers le Tchad est appelé à drainer tout le commerce Soudanien de la région comprise entre le Niger, le Fleuve Congo, et le Nil."

Comme Gabès est le port le plus rapproché du Tchad, nous pensons que la Tunisie serait appelée à bénéficier de la majeure partie du trafic que fournira cette région.

Rappelons que, sous les auspices de l'Institut de Carthage, M. de Béhagle fera, Lundi soir, au Théâtre Municipal, une conférence sur le rôle de la France et de l'Islam en Afrique, destinée à intéresser la population indigène autant que nos compatriotes.

No. 28.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 19. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, May 29, 1896.

IN my despatch No. 7 of the 2nd April, I had the honour to inclose a report of the violent attack made on England by M. de Morès at a meeting which was attended by the Bey's Representative and by nearly all the leading members of the Government here, who were, at all events, tacitly partners to his violent views, by not objecting to the Resolution expressing sympathy with the Dervishes in their contest with us in the Soudan, which was put to the meeting and carried.

I did not, however, mention that a large number of Mussulmans were present at this meeting, and that therefore the words of M. de Morès and the action of the Beylical authorities must have become widely known amongst the Mahommedan population.

Now the question arises, might this murder of the Leach family at Sfax have been at all a consequence of this?

The crime is so mysterious, and its motive so inexplicable, that one must look for some outside cause for the outbreak of fanaticism which appears to be its only explanation—at all events, for the moment.

To the Mahommedan we are, of course, all "Christian dogs," and if once a fanatic thought that he could kill any of us with impunity he would not hesitate to do so. Might not an ignorant man or body of men consider that that impunity was guaranteed them by the manner in which the Beylical Government received M. de Morès' inflammatory words? I will not venture to offer any opinion on this subject, but I may state that my Italian colleague, a man of great experience in these countries and of cool judgment, informs me that he has suggested this theory as a more than possible reason for the murder of Dr. Leach and his family.

In the course of an interview with the Resident Adjoint the other day, M. Millet being absent, Mr. Michell, the head of the North African Mission, informed him in my presence that some Arabs here had often told him that, were it not for the protection afforded them by the French Criminal Code, they would have cut their throats long ago.

This seems to me to lend some colour to the suggestions, so, with reference to Mr. Michell's statement, I asked M. Révoil in a friendly conversation whether he thought it possible that the contrary idea which might now be prevalent among the Arabs might have conduced to the crime. M. Révoil naturally did not think that it had, and declared that M. de Morès put no Resolution to the meeting. I did not think it necessary to discuss this point, although, as a matter of fact, I have been informed by people present that he did do so, and that it was carried by acclamation without a dissentient voice, so only remarked that I had seen the statement in the "Dépêche," which is, as your Lordship is aware, the authoritative organ of the Residency.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 29.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 20. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 2, 1896.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 18 of the 29th ultimo, M. Béhagle last night held a meeting, to which he was introduced by M. Dysbowski.

He stated that in view of the decrease of the influence of France in Europe, it was necessary for her to seek some counterpoise elsewhere; that this could be found most easily in Africa, where four-fifths of the coast-line was under the influence of the Latin races; that he therefore recommended that special encouragement and advantages should be given to the other branches of the Latin race to adopt French nationality. He added that inducements should also be held out to the Arabs to adopt French nationality, and pointed out that whereas in Algeria every difficulty was put in the way of Arabs having the rights of French citizenship, obviously, for fear of their swamping the vote, any Jew was welcomed.

Supposing that his scheme was carried out, he calculated that France would possess 30,000,000 French subjects in Africa.

Up to the present England had seized every possible point of advantage, but there was now a general spirit of combination amongst other nations against her, with the result that she would be allowed no further development, from which the speaker logically deduced her speedy decline. This remark was received with prolonged cheering.

M. Béhagle said nothing himself about his proposed journey, but he was followed by M. Bonnard, the Secretary-General of the Société Africaine de France, who stated that M. Béhagle would start from the western coast to Lake Tchad, proceeding thence with a caravan to Biskra, a railway terminus, the object being to show that great economy in the cost of transit will thus be effected. The cost per ton from Lake Tchad to the European market via the Atlantic coast is now 1,000 fr. a ton, whereas he expects that by the northern route through the Sahara to the Mediterranean coast it will be only 300 fr. per ton.

I think it possible that the friendly question which, as I have had the honour of reporting to your Lordship in my despatch No. 19 of the 29th ultimo, I asked M. Révoil as to the possible effect of M. de Morès' meeting on Arab fanaticism, may have caused a hint to be given to M. Béhagle to be moderate in his abuse of England; at least, I am informed on very good authority that once or twice when he began to tread on dangerous ground with reference to England he pulled up short, to the evident interruption of his train of thought, and consequently to the eloquence and popularity of his speech.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 30.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 12.)

(No. 21. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 2, 1896.

SINCE writing my despatch No. 16A of the 21st ultimo, Mr. Terence Bourke, the British Consular Agent at Bizerta, who is in constant communication with the authorities of the Port Company, has, in answer to a question of mine on the subject, told me that he is convinced that they would not allow the English fleet to enter the inner lake.

I hope, however, that I made it clear that there will be no objection to their anchoring on the seaward side of the fishing barrier, where, as your Lordship will see by the inclosed plans* on which I have marked that obstruction, there is ample room for a large fleet to lie.

Mr. Bourke says that now it is generally supposed at Bizerta, notwithstanding the expropriation of land in the inner lake for the construction of an arsenal, that the

* Not printed.

works will not be undertaken there owing to the great expense of the dredging operations rendered necessary by the shallowness of the water.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 31.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 23. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 8, 1896.

AN announcement appeared a few days back in the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of another and more serious conflict on the Tripolitan frontier between Tunisians and Tripolitans; this is, however, denied in the same paper to-day, in the paragraph of which I have the honour to inclose a copy.

This denial, which has, apparently, an official authority, ignores the fact that the "Dépêche" itself was the publisher of the news, and, notwithstanding it, my Italian colleague informs me that he has just received from Tripoli confirmation of the news of this conflict, which was, as was believed at Tripoli, provoked by Tunisian Spahis (i.e., Government irregular cavalry), but at the moment of the departure of the steamer for Tunis there were no details of the affair.

I heard also to-day from another source of a considerable concentration of Tunisian troops in the direction of Medenine, about three weeks ago. This was given me as coming from a good authority at Gabes, possibly the best point of observation, as probably, at least, some of the troops would be sent from the garrison there.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 31.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 8, 1896.

INCIDENT Tunisino-Tripolitain :—

Plusieurs journaux ont parlé d'un soi-disant incident qui aurait eu lieu sur les frontières de la Tunisie et de la Tripolitaine.

Renseignements pris, cette information est dénuée de tout fondement.

No. 32.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 24. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 10, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose an extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" translating a paragraph from the "Al Bacira," an Arab paper here.

I had myself noticed this paragraph and was struck by the injudiciousness of the French authorities, who are supposed to exercise a very strict censorship over the native press, in having allowed it to appear, when my attention was called to it by an Englishman long resident in Tunis, who has a profound knowledge of the Arabs acquired by a thorough acquaintance of their language and character and by constant dealings with them.

This gentleman pointed out to me in urgent terms the danger of such appeals to Arab fanaticism against the English missionaries, specially pointing to the Sfax murders as being possibly the outcome of M. de Morès' attack, and of the attitude of the Beylical authorities at his meeting. It will be observed that this article does not only generalise; it also practically appeals to Mussulman fanaticism to be directed against English missionaries, and that very soon after a successful crime, as yet unpunished, which is now generally attributed to that feeling.

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This gentleman, though not a missionary himself is, like so many of them, living in an isolated place amongst the natives, and, though a man of cool courage and sound judgment, he did not conceal from me the gravity of the possible results which were to be apprehended if the Beylical authorities continued to allow these incitements to the Arabs to be made, for he knew that Arab fanaticism is not to be played with, specially if it is supposed that it will go unpunished. He wished me to make a representation to the Resident at once, with the view to putting a stop to what he considered a real and pressing danger.

I could not but see the force of his arguments founded on his knowledge of Tunis, for my own experience of the East has shown me what a dangerous tool Mahommedan fanaticism is to play with. I attribute the allowing of these attacks in great measure to the ignorance of the Resident, founded on his complete inexperience, for he has been too much occupied in personal matters since his arrival here to be able in any way to get into touch with the feelings or habits of mind of the natives, while his Adjoint, M. Révoil, whom I believe to be sensible and judicious, has not been here long enough to know anything about such matters and has never had anything to do with other Mahommedan countries. The Secretary to the Government, M. Roy, who has a thorough knowledge of the Arab, has always struck me as a second-rate man, incapable, partly from overwork, partly from want of ability and from acquired Oriental insouciance, and partly from ill-health, of the proper appreciation of a question.

Without wishing to attach too much importance to the incident and to go so far as to make an official representation on the matter, specially as I have received no instructions from your Lordship with reference to the Morès' incident, it seemed to me that it might be advisable to take some unofficial step, which, whilst avoiding any possibility of ruffling the Resident-General, might tend to prevent the recurrence of these inflammatory speeches and articles which would, in the opinion of experts, be dangerous to the lives of English residents in the Regency, so I instructed the British Vice-Consul to introduce the matter into a conversation which he had to hold with the Resident's Chef de Cabinet on other subjects, and I have the honour to inclose to your Lordship the inclosed Memorandum of the conversation, which Mr. Profeit seems to have conducted with considerable tact. He tells me that M. Dobler, who is an intelligent man, but greatly overworked, recognized at once the possible danger of circumstances which had, apparently in his press of work, escaped his notice, and his assurances that every possible step will be taken to prevent their recurrence is doubly satisfactory as showing at once the justice of the representation, and providing, as I hope, against the repetition of any such circumstances as those complained of.

M. Dobler acknowledges, as your Lordship will observe, the correctness of the statement respecting the Morès' resolution, which M. Révoil denied, as reported in my despatch No. 19 of the 29th May, but I fancy that, unless general belief to the contrary is absolutely unfounded, his statement as to the Beylical Government exercising no censorship over the native press, must be received at least *cum grano salis*. As a matter of fact, although M. Dobler, not unnaturally, did his best to minimize the responsibility of the Beylical Government in such matters, this is a contention which could hardly be sustained seriously.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 32.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 7, 1896.

"AL BACIRA," journal Arabe, signale la main de l'Angleterre dans tous les événements qui troublent le monde de l'Islam :—

"Aucune révolution, aucun massacre ne s'est produit en Orient qui n'ait à son origine une intrigue de l'Angleterre, désireuse de se ménager ainsi un motif d'intervenir, soi-disant au nom de l'humanité.

"Dans les dernières affaires d'Arménie, nous avons eu des preuves que tout avait été organisé soit par des missionnaires Anglais, soit par leurs intermédiaires, et le Comité d'Action, composé d'Arméniens et d'Anglais, qui siégeait à Londres, suffit à le prouver.

"L'Angleterre ayant vu que, grâce aux diplomates Français et Russes et à la sagesse du Sultan, qui a suivi les conseils de ces deux Grandes Puissances en accordant

des réformes nécessaires, elle ne pouvait arriver à son but : débarquement militaire ou occupation, l'Angleterre a feint de se montrer satisfaite, mais elle a cherché une seconde affaire en Arménie.

"Elle a trouvé les événements de Crète

"Son vrai but est tout autre. L'Angleterre ne saurait pousser à l'autonomie de quelque pays que ce soit, ni au progrès d'aucune Puissance; l'Angleterre ne cherche que son intérêt personnel"

Ces intrigues ne nous étonnent pas de la part de la Grande-Bretagne. Nous connaissons son égoïsme naturel.

Ce qui nous étonne, c'est l'attitude des diplomates Français et Russes qui se laissent abuser, et négligent de suivre pas à pas ses agissements en Orient.

Cette négligence a rendu l'Angleterre plus audacieuse dans ses combinaisons, qui tendent à détruire ce qui reste du prestige de la France en Orient, prestige justement acquis cependant par d'importants sacrifices d'hommes et d'argent.

Inclosure 2 in No. 32.

Memorandum.

IN conversation to-day with M. Dobler, Chef de Cabinet at the Residency, I drew his attention to an extract from the native paper "Al Bacira" which appeared in the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of the 7th instant. I remarked that it was with considerable alarm that Mr. Haggard took note of continued appeals to the native population of a character such as the extract in question, calculated as they were to incense the naturally fanatical disposition of the Arabs. They were even liable to convey to their minds the impression that the Government would be disposed to countenance excesses on their part against the missionary, an opinion naturally strengthened by the idea that a rigorous censorship over the native press is maintained by the Government of the Protectorate.

Articles of this nature appearing in French newspapers were of little importance, but when native papers indulged in, perhaps, even more exaggerated language against the missionaries the danger to them became greatly augmented. That this was no mistaken view was borne out by the fact that opinion had become very general that the murder of Dr. Leach might be due to the speech of the Marquis de Morès, which was delivered in presence of a Representative of His Highness the Bey, and of many of the highest Tunisian officials. Whether such an opinion was well founded or otherwise, it at least showed into what channels the continued publication of such articles was likely to direct the current of Arab thought. I added that it was undoubtedly a dangerous course of action to permit such articles to continue to appear, from a political point of view, for murders of unoffending British residents—sufficiently serious in themselves—became much more so, from that point of view, if they were those of missionaries, members of large and influential Societies, specially if it could be alleged by these that they had met their deaths from the neglect, or even from a mistaken idea on the part of the natives of the actual incitement of the authorities. He was a Protestant himself and would know what I meant. Greater supervision was perhaps more necessary here than elsewhere, inasmuch as the police force was, as even he had on a previous occasion assured me himself, inadequate for the calls that were made upon it, and would not be likely to be able to prevent violence being done by men, influenced by religious fanaticism, and backed, as they might be led to imagine, by the constant recurrence of Anglophobic articles, by the support of the authorities.

M. Dobler replied that there was really no censorship in existence in Tunis, that the native papers were subjected to similar regulations to the French, and that the only means they had of restraining articles was for the Secretary to the Tunisian Government to send for the offending editor and "lui laver la tête," but that articles appearing in native papers were not subjected to any supervision previous to their publication.

I remarked that even then the possibility of being had up to have a "lavage de tête" must act as a great deterrent on the publication of articles displeasing to the authorities, and that the editor, in this instance, before publishing such an article, must have thought that he was not likely to run any risk in so doing. M. Dobler concurred in admitting that the article was exaggerated and characterized it as ridiculous.

In regard to the murder of Dr. Leach there was not, as far as was yet known, the slightest indication which could connect it with the speech of the Marquis de Morès, nor could he credit it as possible.

I interposed that it required but little to arouse the hatred of the Christian, always latent in the Eastern mind, and that his long knowledge of the East would bear out the truth of this assertion.

He replied that the Tunisian Arab was quiet and tolerant, and not likely to be affected by such newspaper effusions, or by the resolution passed at the meeting of the Marquis de Morès, at which Government officials were present. He further added that these officials were not aware of what was to be the character of the speech, and that, indeed, several had next day expressed to the Residency their regret at the part they had taken in the meeting. While disclaiming any countenance whatsoever for such articles and speeches on the part of the Government, he recognized the possible gravity and danger of their publication in view of their influence on native feeling, and the advisability of an effort being made to avoid their continuance. He, in addition, promised to acquaint the Resident-General with the tenour of our conversation, and ended by saying that Mr. Haggard might rest assured that whatever could be effected by the Residency towards arresting the appearance of such articles would most certainly be done.

(Signed) R. A. PROFEIT.

Tunis, May 9, 1896.

No. 33.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 22.)

(No. 25. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 12, 1896.

AT the close of my despatch No. 24, Confidential, of the 10th instant, I ventured to express the opinion that the assertion of the Resident's Chef de Cabinet that the native press here was not liable to the censorship of the French authorities could not be seriously sustained. This opinion has been corroborated since by the Honourable Terence Bourke, who has told me that M. Roy, the Secrétaire Général du Gouvernement, to whom I also alluded in that despatch, had once informed him that while they have no authority over the French papers here, they had absolute power over the native press.

The general opinion, I may almost say certainly that the "Bacira," the paper from which the cutting I inclosed in that despatch, was made, is the native organ of the Residency, is strengthened by the fact that it is actually printed in the same office as the official Journal. It is therefore clear that if it was not inserted with the actual permission of the authorities, it could only have been so in the conviction of the editor that it would not meet with their disapproval.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S.—It appears that, although translated in a recent copy of the "Dépêche," the original paragraph was in a number of the "Bacira" previous to my conversation with M. Révoil, which I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 19 of the 29th ultimo, so that it does not convey any indication that the gentle hint which I ventured to give him had failed in the effect which I hoped that it might possibly produce.

W. H. D. H.

No. 34.

Memorandum communicated by Italian Ambassador, June 24, 1896.

L'AGENT Consulaire de Sa Majesté à Gabès informe que, d'après des bruits qui courraient dans les cercles militaires, il serait question de préparer une expédition pour rapporter la dépouille du Marquis de Morès et pour punir les Touaregs. Les troupes de la garnison auraient reçu l'ordre de se tenir prêtes à partir.

No. 35.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 27. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 16, 1896.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 23 of the 8th instant, I have the honour to inclose a copy of a despatch which I have just received from the British Consular Agent at Gabes. I am requesting Mr. Calleja to endeavour to ascertain where M. de Morès met the Touareg Chief, and will inform your Lordship of the result.

It would appear as if his journey has been arranged with some care and is more serious in its aims, whatever they may be, and execution, than at first appeared certain from the extravagance of M. de Morès language.

The Italian Agent and Consul-General informed me to-day that he had heard from his colleague at Tripoli that there were rumours of serious conflicts on the frontier, but that as these had not been confirmed by his agents at Gabes and Djerba, he accepted them "sous toute réserve."

The British Consular Agent at Gabes has informed me, in answer to a telegram from me requesting him to send me any information which he could about the recent conflict, reported in my despatch No. 23 of the 8th June, that one had occurred, but that the matter was settled.

It appears likely that it was not of the serious nature at first generally attributed to it; but these occurrences and rumours of others, whether true or not, would seem to show that there is a good deal of friction and commotion on the frontier—whether instigated or encouraged by the French it is, of course, impossible to tell, though the renewal this summer after they had ceased for the last three years of these disturbances, at a moment when travellers, not under the immediate protection of the French, are jealously warned off the neighbourhood of the frontier—taken together with other circumstances to which I have alluded in previous despatches, would seem to point to its being at least not impossible that the French may be not wholly strangers to the agitation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 35.

Mr. Calleja to Consul-General Haggard.

Sir,

Gabes, June 13, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that the camel-drivers and camels, engaged by the Marquis de Morès from Gabes, have returned to Gabes after an absence of thirty-one days.

They report that they were met by Touaregs, who seemed to be expecting the Marquis, and made him welcome. The Touaregs transferred all his effects to their camels, and he continued his journey with them. It was reported that his present journey would last for thirty days more beyond the sixteen traversed by the Gabes men.

I have, &c.
(Signed) J. CALLEJA.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received June 26.)

(No. 28. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 18, 1896.

AS I had the honour of reporting to your Lordship, by telegraph, the Marquis de Morès' expedition, which was, as was hoped here, to have so injurious an effect on our influence and interests in North Africa, has come to a fatal termination at its very beginning, thus tragically justifying the opinion which I ventured to express in my despatch No. 15, Confidential, of the 19th ultimo, that he might "find the Touareg country a very hard nut to crack, and that he might possibly even meet with a check at the very threshold."

The inclosed Report from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" is evidently officially inspired, and, as will be seen from the Memorandum, also inclosed, of a conversation between the British Vice-Consul and the Resident's Chef de Cabinet, the Residency acknowledge that the Marquis de Morès was killed by the Touaregs about 150 kilom. to the south of Danirat, their furthest military post to the south, whence they had on the night of the 16th instant received the news of his death. It would therefore appear that he must have been killed about a week after he had, as I reported in my despatch No. 27 of the 16th instant, placed himself in the hands of the Touareg band, by whom he appears to have been murdered. Your Lordship will observe that in that despatch I assumed that the Touaregs whom the caravan drivers reported on their return to Gabès as having met and taken charge of M. de Morès, had done so by arrangement; but the Residency now say that this was an accidental encounter, and the "Dépêche" lays particular stress on this assertion.

This statement is very probably true; but, of course, every means will be tried to lessen the responsibility for his journey, for such a prearranged meeting could only have been effected through the Agency of the French authorities, between whom and the Touaregs, as I have previously reported to your Lordship, there have been considerable communication during the last few months.

The French Residency now repudiate all responsibility for his journey, alleging that he had undertaken before leaving Tunis not to travel in the direction of Ghadamès; but it is difficult to reconcile this statement with their previous attitude towards his mission, and with his own public utterances at the moment of his departure at Gabès, where, according to the Italian Agent, whose Report I had the honour of inclosing in my despatch No. 15 of the 19th ultimo, he was starting for Ghadamès, "appuyé autant que possible par les autorités Françaises." This French assistance was confirmed to me by the British Consular Agent there.

There is apparently, therefore, certainly an endeavour to minimize their share in so ghastly a failure, an endeavour, however, in which, in view of the publicity of the facts, they will find it difficult to succeed.

I may add, in confirmation of the conviction that the authorities were aware of M. de Morès' intention to go to Ghadamès, the fact that twelve French officers had announced their intention of resigning their commissions and joining his expedition if ever he arrived at Ghadamès. In fact, it was an understood thing that that town was the first stage of his journey. In conversation, too, with Major Rebillet, the Military Attaché to the Residency, who has the direction of all matters on the frontier, he practically acknowledged to me that he was aware of M. de Morès' intention to proceed to Ghadamès, for he said that he had warned him of the danger to which he was exposing himself, and, on taking leave, had remarked that he scarcely expected to see him return alive.

Not only will this be a severe blow to their prestige and to the chimerical Franco-Islamic views which they welcomed with such enthusiasm, but it must be a check to the efforts which they have recently been making to conciliate the Touaregs, and to open up the south for the passage of their trade and the propagand of their political ideas, summed up by M. de Morès in his last speech in the following words: "De pénétrer dans les régions soumises à l'influence de l'Angleterre pour exciter toutes les peuplades qui ne se sont pas encore prononcées ouvertement contre cette nation et n'ont pas encore entrepris de la combattre par tous les moyens dont elles disposent."

Your Lordship will observe that the article in the "Dépêche" closes with an appeal for vengeance. If this appeal be responded to it may well happen that, not

only may the French find themselves with the difficult task before them of pursuing the Touaregs into the desert and punishing them there, but also that its execution may give rise to further complications.

It is most extraordinary how nearly all these French expeditions in Africa seem to end in the same way. This would, in view of the fact that ours are generally, if not crowned with absolute success, at least free from fatal disaster, seem to point to some inherent incapacity in the French character to organize such expeditions and to deal with natives, which is at least encouraging to us in any rivalry which may exist between English and French interests in Africa; but, as the French are hardly likely to admit or even to realize this, they generally find it easier to attribute these murders to English instigation, and I fully expect to see the French press lay the assassination of M. de Morès at our door, specially in view of the fact of his violent attacks on England.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S.—I had hardly written the closing words of this despatch when my eye fell on the inclosed paragraph in the "Dépêche" quoted from a paper of weight like the "Figaro," and an hour later I read the paragraph from a Tunis paper, also inclosed. I may add that the angry looks of some of the Frenchmen whom one encounters to-day in the streets of Tunis would seem to point to the fact that they are fully convinced that Her Majesty's Consulate-General instigated the murder of M. de Morès.

W. H. D. H.

Inclosure I in No. 36.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 18, 1896.

MERCREDI, dans la matinée, le bruit se répandit, tout à coup, dans Tunis, avec une persistance extraordinaire, que le Marquis de Morès et son expédition venaient d'être massacrés.

Renseignement pris, le fait était malheureusement exact et nos dépêches d'hier ne pouvaient plus laisser le moindre doute à cet égard.

M. de Morès n'est point, hélas! le premier explorateur Africain qui succombe à sa tâche. Il ne fait que grossir la sanglante phalange des Crampel, des Flatters et de tant d'autres valeureux enfants de la France dont le sang généreux a rougi, depuis vingt ans, les sables de l'Afrique.

Sa mort n'en aura pas moins, à Tunis et dans toute la Régence, un retentissement douloureux et prolongé.

M. de Morès à Tunis.

Il y a si peu de temps, en effet, qu'il était au milieu de nous plein de vie, de force, et d'enthousiasme.

Qui ne se rappelle encore ici la conférence qu'il nous donnait le 29 Mars dernier? Le Théâtre Français était trop petit pour contenir la foule qui se pressait afin de l'entendre, et qui applaudissait, à tout rompre, aux élans passionnés et patriotes de ce grand jeune homme de 36 ans, à la moustache fièrement relevée, à la parole si chaude et si vibrante dont le torrent coulait impétueux avec une rapidité superbe pendant que les bras croisés sur la poitrine semblaient en contenir les ardeurs et l'empêcher d'éclater sous la pression intérieure.

C'était bien l'officier de cavalerie parlant avec la même fougue qu'il aurait chargé.

Sa conférence donnée, M. de Morès se retira quelque temps à Hammam-Lif avec sa jeune femme, passant là, dans la paix d'une douce villégiature, ses derniers jours de bonheur, organisant, en même temps, sa caravane et achevant ses préparatifs de départ.

Derniers Adieux.

Le 22 Avril, nous retrouvâmes M. de Morès au paquebot de la Compagnie Transatlantique. Il était venu accompagner à bord de la "Ville de Madrid" Mme. la Marquise de Morès, qui regagnait la France.

Rarement, il nous fut donné d'assister à plus navrants adieux. Quand le steamer quitta l'appontement, et qu'après une dernière étreinte, il fallut se séparer, la Marquise resta sur le pont pendant que le Marquis vint se placer au bord même de l'appontement, regardant s'éloigner tout ce qu'il aimait le plus ici-bas. Leurs yeux ne se quittaient pas et depuis longtemps déjà, de Morès, à coup sûr, ne distinguait plus que confusément les traits de celle qui partait, qu'il était encore là hypnotisé et anéanti. Sa haute taille se dessinait sous le ciel bleu; pas une larme ne tombait de sa paupière; mais on sentait que cet homme, de fer pourtant, agonisait et que son cœur était broyé.

C'était hélas! le suprême adieu!

En route pour le Sud.

M. de Morès gagna Sousse, Sfax, et Gabès. Dans ces villes, il parla comme il avait parlé à Tunis. Ce fut partout le même sujet traité: "La pénétration de l'Afrique; le rôle de la France; la Méditerranée aux riverains;" partout aussi ce furent les mêmes applaudissements recueillis.

Il donnait sa conférence à Gabès, au "Café de l'Oasis," le Jeudi, 14 Mai. Dès le lendemain, il partait pour aller rejoindre sa caravane sur la route de Kebili.

Il comptait avec elle gagner Rhat, où il demeurerait jusqu'à la fin de l'été; puis de là, repartir alors pour atteindre Zinder, le but de son voyage.

En route, il voulait conclure des Traités avec les différentes tribus Sahariennes; il voulait montrer à ces tribus qu'elles n'ont pas dans la France une ennemie, mais plutôt une alliée prête à les aider à la seule condition qu'elles laissent passer en liberté nos caravanes Françaises.

Avis du Gouvernement.

La Résidence Générale avait prévenu toutefois M. de Morès de l'impossibilité où il était de gagner le Centre Africain par le Sahara Tunisien. Vainement de Morès avait objecté que, de Ouargla, il s'était créé des appuis à Timassinin, en envoyant aux Touaregs de ces contrées pour 10,000 fr. de blé, et que les Senoussi lui seraient favorables. Le Gouvernement du Protectorat avait énergiquement maintenu ses défenses.

Pour obtenir l'autorisation nécessaire au recrutement de son personnel en Tunisie, il avait donc remis au Résident-Général un engagement écrit de suivre, en quittant Gabès, la ligne de Bir-es-Sof, Bir-el-Haïrane, et El-Biodh, dernier poste Français sur le Sahara.

Composition de sa Caravane.

Son expédition, très aléatoire et très dangereuse, avait alors été fort bien organisée. Il avait pris avec lui, comme interprète, un jeune indigène d'excellente famille, Abd-el-Hak, fils du Cheikh El-Ouartani, ancien Président des Habous; un riche négociant Rhadamésien, établi à Tunis, Sil El Hadj Ali qui, par sa mère, était neveu du Gouverneur de Rhat; un autre indigène nommé Ali ben Smerli et des nègres, tous mariés, pères de famille, choisis, avec le plus grand soin, par leur Cheik Salem. Trente-huit personnes formaient ainsi sa suite; toutes étaient armées de fusils à tir rapide. Il emmenait, en outre, quarante-cinq chameaux chargés d'une pacotille valant environ 40,000 fr.

Changement d'Itinéraire.

Le voilà donc parti de Gabès pour Kebili. Arrivé là, au lieu de suivre l'itinéraire convenu avec la Résidence, il tourna brusquement à l'est en longeant la frontière Tripolitaine.

Pourquoi ce changement soudain contraire à la parole donnée? Il paraîtrait d'après les *on dit* d'un correspondant de M. de Morès, qu'il aurait été prévenu que le Général de Larroque avait envoyé au-devant de lui, à Bir Es-Sof, un officier chargé de l'empêcher de passer outre, et, pour éviter l'officier,—cest-à-dire le salut,—il avait modifié sa route.

A El-Ouatia.

Le 3 Juin dernier, il était arrivé de la sorte à El Ouatia, près Sinaoun.

Depuis plusieurs jours déjà, sa caravane et lui avaient été rejoints par des Touaregs Ifoghar, l'une des branches des Touaregs Azdjer. Il était entré en relations avec eux et, tout imbu des fausses idées du Colonel de Polignac et de Duverryer sur la confiance que l'on pouvait mettre dans la parole et la bonne foi de ces incorrigibles pillards, il avait écouté leurs propositions.

Ces propositions étaient simples.

"Renvoyez," lui disaient les Touaregs, "votre escorte et vos chameaux Tunisiens. Nous vous fournirons nous-mêmes escorte et chameaux et, sous notre garde et notre conduite, vous irez où vous voudrez dans une sécurité parfaite.

Le malheureux, trompé, comme tant d'autres, par les faux récits des membres de la Mission Mircher, écouta ce langage des Touaregs.

Honnête, loyal et bon, il n'aperçut ni le piège grossier qu'ils lui tendaient ni le guet-apens qui se préparait à l'horizon.

Il congédia vingt-neuf de ses hommes sur trente-huit; renvoya tous ses chameaux; remplaça les hommes congédiés par les Touaregs auxquels il distribua les fusils à tir rapide enlevés à ses compagnons qui partaient, et acheta, ou loua, de ses nouveaux amis, les chameaux nécessaires à la continuation de son voyage. Pour comble, il paya d'avance et l'escorte et les bêtes.

L'escorte était là, frémissante, prête à la curée.

Les bêtes, il fallut les attendre cinq jours!

Cinq longues journées, les Touaregs amusèrent de Morès, inventant tantôt un prétexte, tantôt un autre, pour expliquer le retard de leurs bêtes qu'il avait fallu chercher si loin, si loin!

Tout cela, l'escorte des Tunisiens congédiés l'a raconté. La suite et le dénouement du drame, un seul, jusqu'à présent, les a fait connaître: Ali ben Smerli; et voici son récit.

Arrivée des Chaâmba.

Dès le 4 Juin, une bande de Chaâmba dissidents vint camper près du Français. Pauvres gens, ils manifestaient un tel regret de vivre loin de la terre de la patrie, que Morès n'y tint pas et leur promit son intervention près du Gouvernement de la République pour leur faire obtenir l'aman.

Chaâmba pourtant et Touaregs s'entendaient au mieux pendant ce temps et préparaient ensemble un de ces coups de main hardis et sinistres, dont l'infortuné de Morès faisait naguère un trop véridique récit. Il parlait de la colonne de Hicks Pacha:—

"Longtemps," disait-il, "les Touaregs la suivirent en silence; ils l'entourèrent sans même qu'elle pût s'en douter. Puis, à un signal donné, ils fondirent. Tout fut tué jusqu'au dernier homme, et, le lendemain, quand l'aurore se leva, il ne restait plus rien des blancs; la mer humaine avait passée."

Était-ce le passé qu'il racontait ainsi, ou l'avenir qu'il entrevoyait alors?

Le Drame.

Cependant, le 7 Juin au soir, les chameaux, si longtemps attendus, étaient arrivés. Aussi, le 8 au matin, les préparatifs du départ commencèrent. Les Touaregs lentement chargèrent les marchandises et le matériel sur leurs bêtes, et le soleil était déjà haut quand le signal de marche fut donné.

En tête de la caravane, marchait Abd-el-Hak; derrière lui, à quelques pas, de Morès, tous deux sur des chameaux et, avec eux, Hadj Ali et deux serviteurs Tunisiens.

Plus loin, à 200 mètres en arrière environ, le convoi s'avancait escorté des

Touaregs et guidé par quatre serviteurs Tunisiens, parmi lesquels Ali-ben-Smerli.

On allait lentement, et l'on avait à peine parcouru 3 kilom. depuis Bir-el-Ouatia, lorsque, soudain, sans cris, sans provocation, trois des Touaregs de l'escorte lancent leurs meharis et fondent au galop, le sabre haut, sur de Morès.

Ils avaient compté sans l'audace et le sang-froid de l'officier. D'un coup de revolver, il abat un de ses agresseurs, et les deux autres prennent la fuite.

Mais cette attaque était le signal convenu. En deux troupes, Touaregs et Chaâmba se précipitèrent, les uns sur le groupe de Morès, les autres sur les guides du convoi. En un clin d'œil, ces derniers sont pris, attachés et dépouillés; les chameaux s'agenouillent et les marchandises sont jetées à terre.

De loin alors, Ali-ben-Smerli et ses camarades, réduits à l'impuissance, assistent à l'attaque et à l'héroïque défense de Morès et de ses compagnons. Quatre heures durant, ces cinq hommes tinrent tête à leurs assaillants qui tourbillonnaient autour d'eux comme un nuage de poussière soulevé par le simoun. Jusqu'à midi, les cinq héros, que nous unissons dans notre admiration et dans nos respects, frappèrent sans relâche, rendant coup pour coup et répondant aux clameurs furieuses de leurs assassins par le crépitements de leurs carabines.

A midi seulement tout se tut et un lourd silence de mort plana sur ce champ de carnage.

Après le Massacre.

La soirée fut employée, par les Touaregs et les Chaâmba, au partage des dépouilles volées aux morts.

Les uns et les autres couchèrent près de leurs victimes. Entre temps, ils rassurèrent leurs captifs et leur rendirent leurs vêtements.

Ce fut le 9 au matin seulement qu'ils se décidèrent à quitter ces lieux sanglants et à fuir vers le sud en s'enfonçant dans le désert avec leurs prisonniers et leur butin.

Le 9 au soir, Ali-ben-Smerli et ses camarades purent s'évader. Ils refirent, à peu près, dans la journée du 10, le chemin parcouru dans celle du 9, et se retrouvèrent, le soir, près des cadavres raidis de leur chef et de leurs amis. Ils s'arrêtèrent et les reconnurent tous les uns après les autres. Tous les cinq étaient couchés côte à côte; tous les cinq dormaient leur même sommeil après avoir versé leur sang pour la même cause; tous les cinq, s'étant battus comme des lions, étaient tellement criblés de blessures et de coups qu'il était impossible de distinguer celles provenant d'armes à feu de celles provenant d'armes blanches.

De Morès était étendu sur le ventre, les bras en avant.

Regardons-le bien. Son cadavre est le résultat des théories des de Polignac et des Duverryer sur l'honneur, la droiture, et la loyauté des Touaregs.

Conclusion.

Et maintenant, que tout ce noble sang, sang de Français et sang indigènes, à coulé, il nous reste un double devoir à remplir.

Le premier, c'est de nous incliner, avec un respect profond, sur ces tombes si tragiquement ouvertes. C'est de saluer, sans distinction de race, de religion, ou de nationalité, ces vaillants qui sont tombés ensemble, après avoir lutté, cinq contre 100, pendant quatre heures, sans faiblir et sans reculer, pour le drapeau de la France et la cause, plus sainte encore, de la civilisation.

Le sang qui coule pour de telles causes ne saurait jamais couler en vain, et le second de nos devoirs est de le venger.

Il y a trop longtemps que les Touaregs Azdjer, ces pirates du désert, abusent de la longanimité et de la patience de la France. Elle est longue la liste de leurs victimes. En 1869, c'est Mlle. Tinne, massacrée à Birguiz; en 1876, ce sont quatre Pères Blancs, tués entre El-Goleah et le Touat; en 1879, ce sont MM. Dourneaux-Dupéré et Joubert, assassinés par les Chaâmba, entre Ghadamès et Rhat. En 1881, c'est Flatters; en 1886, ce sont quatre Pères Blancs encore et enfin hier, c'étaient de Morès et nos Tunisiens qui tombaient sous les coups des mêmes assassins. Et nous disons bien des mêmes assassins; car on sait que parmi eux se trouvaient les Chefs Okhaâ-ben-Bechaoui et An Deboul qui avaient déjà escorté et trahi Flatters. Il est temps que tant de massacres ne restent pas impunis et que, puisque la douceur

a échoué et n'a servi qu'à rendre les pillards plus audacieux, la force, enfin, les châtie comme ils le méritent, les poursuive jusque dans leurs repaires; leur fasse expier tout le sang versé et assure définitivement aux routes du désert la paix et la sécurité.

Inclosure 2 in No. 36.

Memorandum.

IN reply to a question as to whether the Residency had received any confirmation of the reported assassination of the Marquis de Morès, M. Dobler informed me that the message which they had received from the military authorities left no doubt as to the accuracy of the report. This tragic result he attributed to the Marquis having been induced by a band of Touaregs, whom he met *en route*, to confide himself and his followers to their escort. He had probably entered the more readily into the snare thus prepared for him from the impression that, under their guidance, he would be more likely to attain the object of his expedition. On this subject, however, M. Dobler was not communicative, beyond saying that it was believed that the Marquis intended to reach Rhat by way of Ghadamès. It is consequently supposed that, after having transferred his baggage to their own camels, and after the departure of the majority of the original caravan, the Touaregs, at a place about 150 kilom. south of Danirat, fell upon and killed the Marquis and his companions.

M. Dobler added that, while the Government could not absolutely prevent travellers in these regions, strict injunctions had been given to the French authorities to prevent natives from acting as bearers, and from supplying camels for baggage purposes. For this reason, previous to his departure from Tunis, de Morès gave his word that he was only to pass from Gabès by the country of the Nefzaoua to the Algerian frontier. It is, therefore, surmised that, as soon as he had passed the last military post, he changed his route and made for the direction of Ghadamès.

By these remarks M. Dobler evidently intended to show that the French authorities were in no way officially connected with the expedition, and that, as Morès had departed from his course, they were not responsible for the occurrence.

The danger of travelling in these regions, he remarked, could not be exaggerated, and the spirit of enmity towards Christians far from diminishing, would seem to be on the increase. This was to be attributed in great measure to the insidious propaganda of the Senoussi. The influence of this sect is everywhere growing on the Mediterranean littoral, is very skilfully employed, and must sooner or later attain dimensions with which Governments having interests in North Africa will sooner or later have to reckon. Through Tripoli, Tunis, Algiers, and Morocco its devotees proclaim the tenets of the new crusade, and that so insidiously as to escape detection.

Inclosure 3 in No. 36.

Extracts from Tunisian Papers.

LE "Figaro" dit: "Si M. de Morès est réellement mort, il conviendra de se rappeler ce qu'il nous disait avant son départ: 'J'ai mené une campagne très violente contre l'action Anglaise en Afrique; il ne faudra pas vous étonner outre mesure si cela me porte malheur là-bas.'"

Le bruit courait à Tunis, Mercredi matin, dès la première heure, que le Marquis de Morès avait été massacré dans les environs de Rhadamès.

Le soir, une dépêche de Gabès arrivait, paraissant confirmer les bruits pessimistes du matin.

A l'heure où nous écrivons ces lignes, la nouvelle officielle vient nous confirmer, malheureusement, cet inqualifiable assassinat.

Mais, la pensée, l'opinion publique, le soupçon général est que ce sont les Anglais qui, encore une fois, voulaient faire parler d'eux par quelque énormité, par quelque brigandage.

Tout le monde se souvient des conférences du Marquis de Morès, avant son départ pour le désert.

"L'ennemi le plus à redouter," disait-il, "et par conséquent le plus à combattre, c'est Albion, dont on ne peut séparer le nom du qualificatif de *perfidie*."

Son intention était d'aller à travers le désert encourager les Derviches à la révolte contre la domination du maudit et détesté léopard.

Il est donc assez naturel que le soupçon d'un pareil guet-apens se soit porté sur l'ennemie séculaire, traditionnelle de la France.

Aucun méfait de la part des Anglais ne nous étonne, car, depuis des siècles, ils nous ont fait, et continuent à nous faire tout le mal qu'ils peuvent; toujours, et partout, la France sent la main de l'Angleterre dans tout ce qui lui arrive de désagréable, de douloureux, et de fatal.

D'ailleurs, le souvenir du malheureux Olivier Pain est encore trop présent à notre esprit, pour que nous doutions, un seul instant, de la véracité des accusations publiques contre notre ennemie acharnée.

No. 37.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 29. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 20, 1896.

AT the close of the Memorandum of the conversation between Mr. Profeit, the British Vice-Consul, and the Resident's Chef de Cabinet, inclosed in my immediately preceding despatch, your Lordship may have observed the remarks of the latter with reference to the alleged great and mischievous influence of the Senoussi sect in Tunis. He also alludes to the extraordinary secrecy of their proceedings.

This may be true, but, though the French authorities should be supposed, with the powerful machinery at their command, to know more about such matters than any one else, they are so little in touch with the natives, and their police is so ineffective, that I think that such a statement should be received with caution, and your Lordship will notice that, even according to M. Dobler, they know very little about the workings of the Society, which he says are so insidious as to avoid detection. If this be so, it is perhaps the most curious feature in the matter, for the natives of Tunis have the reputation of not being able to keep a secret for long, so much so, that the Courts rely upon this failing for the eventual discovery of carefully concealed crime.

Since my arrival here I have constantly endeavoured on my own account to make out something about the workings of the sect in Tunis, but ineffectually, so have come to the conclusion either that M. Dobler is right, and that the secrecy of their proceedings is phenomenal or that, at all events for the present, they are not very active.

I happened yesterday to have a very good opportunity of cross-questioning an influential Arab gentleman, specially powerful in Kairwan, where, if anywhere in North Africa this religious sect must be working, and where its workings could certainly not escape his notice. He assured me that the sect was not active or dangerous, at all events in Tunis. Of course there is nothing to prevent my acquaintance from speaking falsely, and he may even be himself a leader of this Society; but he might possibly have said to me what he would not have said to a Frenchman, and I could detect nothing in his replies to my questions or in his manner to give me any reason to suppose that he was not speaking the truth. To-day, moreover, I had a conversation with another Arab gentleman, a large landowner in the neighbourhood of Tunis, the leading man in a flourishing country town. I questioned him on the subject through one of my janissaries, and could see that neither of them understood in the least to what I was alluding. He not only declared that the Senoussi sect did not exist in his district, but he had never even heard of it, and both my janissary's and his puzzled expression at, and irrelevant answers to my questions, convinced me that the whole subject was new to them.

Of two others whom I have questioned lately on the subject, one said that he had heard of Senoussi as being influential in Tripoli, but had never heard him alluded to in Tunis; the other, a man of standing, education, and travel, knew all about the sect, which he said was very numerous in Tripoli. He added that sometimes the Marocines came and preached the tenets of the sect openly in the mosques; but that, as far as Tunis was concerned, there were very few followers of the sect, and that there was nothing secret about their proceedings.

I believe that the inquiries of my predecessor, whose knowledge of Arabic gave him

much greater opportunities of probing such a question than I can possibly have, arrived at the same result.

I observe that some of the French papers attribute M. de Morès' murder to the action of the Senoussi, and M. Dobler would seem to suggest that, at least indirectly, this may have helped to bring about his death; but it would seem unnecessary to go beyond the known murderous and predatory instinct and habits of the Touaregs to account for that occurrence.

I have discovered in the archives an unnumbered despatch which Mr. Ricketts apparently sent to the Foreign Office on the 30th April or the 1st May, 1889, which gives a good deal of information on the subject of the sect.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 38.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 30.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 23, 1896.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 28 of the 18th instant, I have the honour to inclose herewith a copy of a report from the British Consular Agent at Gabes, giving the details of the murder of the Marquis de Morès.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 38.

Mr. Calleja to Consul-General Haggard.

Sir,

Gabes, June 20, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to communicate to you the circumstances which I have been able to learn of from outside sources regarding the expedition undertaken by the Marquis de Morès and its unfortunate termination.

The Gabes camel-drivers, twelve in number, were engaged to go as the Marquis might order as far as Ghat. The departure from Gabes was on the 13th May, but I regret that I cannot state any of the subsequent dates with precision. I can only put them down approximately.

The caravan was added to near Kebilli, and on the way, by Tunisian border Arabs and Algerian Arabs engaged by the Marquis. When, about the 3rd or 4th June, the caravan was near Sinaoui, there was a difficulty for water, and while all the main body of the caravan waited, the interpreter and three men went off in one direction in search of water, and one man went off in another direction. The latter heard firing, which it was afterwards learned was due to a gazelle hunt; but he was alarmed, and returned, reporting that enemies were likely at hand. The caravan moved on and met with water, where it was determined to camp, as there was as yet no news of the interpreter's party. The said party meanwhile had met two Touaregs and a Sinaoui man, who showed themselves very friendly, and came into the camp along with the party the next day towards midday. The party had brought a camel-load of water from another well. Other Touaregs came into the camp in the evening, and all hospitality was shown by them in several ways, such as by bringing three large dishes of cuscusu.

The Touaregs, with their Chief, Besh Shaoni, who were encamped in the neighbourhood, offered to make up a caravan for the Marquis, with which they said he could travel in any direction he pleased, and with which, in particular, he could reach Ghat in half the time that the Gabes men would take. The Marquis was completely persuaded by these representations and offers, and signified to the Gabes men that they were to go back, while he would go on with a Touareg caravan. The Gabes men called him to witness that they were perfectly ready to fulfil their contract by going on with him, but he insisted on dispensing with their services, and he paid them for twenty-two days' travelling to cover all the time they had been occupied with him. All the Tunisian camel-drivers left the Marquis about the 5th June, and, being without load, travelled rapidly. The Gabes men made a short cut by Tatahionine, and reached here on the 12th June.

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After the Gabes camels left the Touaregs, on some pretext or another, detained the Marquis for two or three days, and started with him on the 8th June from Sinaoui.

When they had been travelling for a short distance, three Touaregs came up behind the Marquis and wounded him with swords. Morès turned round, and with his revolver shot one dead and wounded two; but then all the Touaregs set on him and finished by killing him.

The Marquis' own party, besides himself, consisted of ten. Of the eleven five were killed, and six escaped death. The man who has given information of the massacre was taken prisoner, but was afterwards set free. On his return journey he found the dead body of the Marquis and the other four bodies lying where they had been killed. He then came on to the nearest French port and gave the news.

Among those killed by the Touaregs there was Mohamed-bin-Hadj-Ali Et Ini, a very wealthy man of Ghadames origin, very well known at Tunis, who had started with the Marquis in order to go and see his mother. The Sinaoui guide was also killed. The other survivors were left free, but I have no news of them.

The place the massacre took place is a little way beyond Sinaoui on the route to Ghadames, and about three days' journey from Ghadames.

The news they brought in by one of the survivors has been corroborated by a caravanist, who, having passed the site of the massacre after it happened, has yesterday reported to the military authorities that the dead bodies remained lying. The said authorities are sending out people to fetch the bodies in.

I have, &c.
(Signed) F. CALLEJA.

No. 39.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 31. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 23, 1896.

IN my despatch No. 28, Confidential, of the 18th instant, I ventured to suggest that if the French authorities responded to the cry of vengeance for the murder of the Marquis de Morès which was being raised, it might bring about complications. These complications would seem to be foreshadowed in the inclosed article from the "Dépêche," which, apart from the semi-official character of that paper, is to me additionally authoritative, inasmuch as in its geographical matter, at all events, it gives precisely the same views, expressed in much the same words, as those conveyed to me in conversation by Major Rebillat, the Military Attaché to the Residency, who has all the affairs of the frontier under his direction. It is to me, therefore, quite clear that if not, as is likely, actually written by him, it, at least, completely represents his views, which may be taken, for the moment, at all events, to be those of the French authorities.

Your Lordship will observe that these views are somewhat startling. Major Rebillat told me, and it is repeated here, that, taking as its basis the Convention concluded between your Lordship and M. Waddington on the 5th August, 1890, under which the Hinterland south of Algiers and Tunis was within the sphere of French influence; towns such as Ghadamès, Sinaoun, and Rhat were Turkish, but that the surrounding districts were under French influence, i.e., that the towns are Turkish, but that the country round is French. He went on to say that this being the case, the French authorities had, although M. de Morès was killed between Sinaoun and Ghadamès, two Tripolitan towns, no grievance against the Turks, for he was not killed in Tripolitan territory.

This might, at first sight, of course, be considered as promising well, as indicating no wish to harass the Turks, save that such a claim would raise the question of possession of territory in such a manner as to make it difficult for the Turks not to oppose it. Such a pretension, moreover, would also give a somewhat wider interpretation to the second clause of the Treaty quoted than possibly your Lordship intended.

One can now see how all these late frontier disturbances have come about. According to this new French theory there is no Tripolitan territory in those regions. It is all Tunisian; there are, therefore, no Tripolitan tribes; they are Tunisian, and must pay Tunisian taxes. They resist this act of oppressive usurpation, and are shot

down. The towns are mere Turkish settlements in a Tunisian country; the Turks have, therefore, obviously no right even of access to or fro, save by permission of the Tunisian authorities, by whose sufferance, in fact, they hold them. With such views in his head, no wonder M. Millet said to me once, as I reported at the time, "Nous ne permettons pas aux Turcs de nous opposer une barrière entre nous et le Soudan."

I could hardly believe that I had heard Major Rebillat's views aright, but Mr. Profeit, the British Vice-Consul who was present during our conversation, assured me that he had undoubtedly said exactly what I have had the honour to report, and, under the circumstances I have also mentioned, the inclosed article further confirms the accuracy of my hearing.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 39.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 22, 1896.

ON a vu, hier matin, dans nos dépêches, que "l'Événement" maintient qu'El-Ouatia, où a eu lieu le massacre, se trouve en Tripolitaine.

Il importe de donner à cette affirmation, absolument erronée, le démenti catégorique qu'elle mérite.

La seule carte à consulter pour juger la question est celle publiée au ¹/₁₀₀₀₀₀ par le Service Géographique de l'Armée, Édition 1894.

Or, sur cette carte, la frontière entre la Tunisie et la Tripolitaine est nettement indiquée, de la mer jusqu'à l'entrée du Sahara, au point de Djeneyen. Mais, à partir de ce point, aucune ligne de démarcation n'existe. On est en plein Sahara, dans ce Sahara mystérieux dont la possession est réglée par la Convention Franco-Anglaise du 5 Août, 1890, signée par Lord Salisbury et qui reconnaît, Article II, comme soumis à l'autorité de la France, le sud de ses possessions Méditerranéennes jusqu'à la ligne Say, sur le Niger, et Baroua, sur le Lac Tchad, c'est-à-dire l'hinterland Algérien et Tunisien.

L'hinterland d'une région est cette partie de l'intérieur qui en relève géographiquement et commercialement. Or, le Sahara, par lui-même sans valeur, ne tire son importance que des routes qui mettent en communication la côte Méditerranéenne avec le Soudan. La route, suivie par de Morès, et que jalonnent les seuls points d'eau de tout le Sahara, est la véritable route Saharienne de la Tunisie. Du reste, elle est continuellement sillonnée par les caravanes qui se rendent à notre marché de Tatahouine ou en partent. Elle appartient donc bien à l'hinterland Tunisien et constitue cet hinterland, ainsi, nous le répétons, que l'a reconnu, d'ailleurs, la Convention du 5 Août.

La Tripolitaine ne saurait en dire autant, car cette route, la seule route Saharienne qui desserve la Régence, ne dessert aucun point du vilayet voisin.

Nous ajouterons que le Sahara est le territoire des Touaregs, nomades et indépendants pour la plupart, puisque quelques fractions seulement de ces tribus ont accepté récemment la protection de la France.

La Porte n'a donc aucun droit sur ces tribus; elle n'en a du reste jamais réclamé aucun; nous ne lui en avons jamais reconnu et, à aucune époque, nous n'avons fait peser sur elle la responsabilité des massacres commis par ces incorrigibles pillards.

Nous rappelions, dans un de nos derniers numéros, quelques-uns de ces massacres: massacre de Dournaux Dupéré, massacre des Pères Blancs, massacre de Flatters, &c.; pour aucun d'eux, nous n'avons songé, même un instant, à demander réparation à la Turquie.

Elle a quelques établissements avancés au milieu des tribus Touaregs. Ces établissements, jadis, étaient eux-mêmes indépendants, vivant avec leurs voisins du désert tantôt en paix et tantôt en guerre. En s'emparant de ces postes, la Turquie n'a rien changé à leurs communes relations antérieures. Ghadamès et Rhat, par exemple, sont tantôt en bonne intelligence et tantôt en état d'hostilité avec les Touaregs; en 1886 même, la petite garnison de Rhat fut massacrée par eux. Mais jamais l'Empire Ottoman n'a cherché à étendre son autorité et son action sur ces insoumis.

Puisque le crime qui vient de s'accomplir à El-Ouatia s'est passé en plein Sahara, sur territoire Touareg, ce n'est donc nullement, comme le prétend "l'Événement," à la Turquie qu'il faut demander compte du sang versé. Cette thèse de notre confrère Parisien n'est ni juste, ni patriotique.

Elle est injuste pour les raisons que nous venons d'exposer; elle est antipatriotique parce que, si elle pouvait prévaloir, elle tendrait à donner à la Porte, au détriment de la France, une influence et une autorité que nous lui avons toujours contestées.

Non, ne demandons point à la Turquie vengeance pour de Morès et ses compagnons. Vengeons-les nous-mêmes. Que leur sacrifice, héroïquement accompli, soit pour nous l'occasion d'un pas en avant décisif dans les profondeurs du Sahara.

Allons! Et si nous trouvons devant nous les assassins de nos frères, punissons-les comme ils le méritent. Mais surtout vengeons-les comme, à coup sûr, ils souhaitent le plus d'être vengés: Prenons possession de cette terre témoin de leur vaillance, de ce sable qui a bu leur noble sang, de cet espace qui a répercuté leurs cris de guerre et reçu leur dernier soupir. Établissons-nous là définitivement; qu'un fort y soit construit portant le nom des morts; que nos couleurs y flottent et que la vue de ces couleurs, rayonnant dans l'incommensurable azur, annonce aux bandits que le Sahara sera bientôt libre et que pour eux approche l'heure du châtiment final.

No. 40.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 32. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 24, 1896.

THINKING it better, before sending off my immediately preceding despatch on the subject of the views of the French authorities here with reference to the Tunis-Tripolitan frontier, to get some confirmation of Major Rebillet's statement, specially as my conversation with him had been of a casual and informal character, I delayed dispatching it and took an opportunity this morning of speaking on the matter to the Resident-General.

M. Millet fully confirmed the views expressed by his Military Attaché and enlarged upon by the "Dépêche" in the article inclosed in my immediately preceding despatch.

He said that according to the Convention between your Lordship and M. Waddington of the 5th August, 1890, the sphere of French influence was acknowledged to extend from the territory of Tunis to the south as far as Lake Tchad—thus taking in the country surrounding Sinaoun, Ghadamès, and Rhat—that these were merely Turkish settlements, and that the surrounding districts were in nowise under Turkish sway, as was shown by the fact that the Turks themselves had constantly to submit to the exactions of the Touaregs in the neighbourhood of these places. He emphasized this very strongly in reply to a remark from me that it appeared that the Marquis de Morès having been killed between Sinaoun and Ghadamès had fallen on Turkish territory. "It is not Turkish territory," he replied, and on my saying that this would free Turkey from any responsibility for the murder of the Marquis de Morès, he replied, "just so, but it gives us the argument which we shall make use of, when the occasion arises, that she has no claim on a territory where she cannot preserve order or protect the lives of travellers."

On my inquiring as to how far he considered that French influence extended to the east, he said that a reference to the line of longitude on the map would show this. Of course, according to this theory, a very large part of what has hitherto been considered Tripoli would cease to be so and pass to France. He added that the frontier between Tunis and Tripoli had been defined as far as Djeneyen, and practically conveyed that from that point they considered themselves at liberty to take what they liked, nor do I imagine that even north of Djeneyen they would consider it necessary to be very particular, and here it is worth observing that Sinaoun is to the east of Djeneyen.

M. Millet told me (perhaps somewhat hesitatingly) that there was no immediate intention of sending an expedition to punish the Touaregs, but that M. de Morès' murder would be an additional drop to the cup which was already nearly full.

Since writing the above I have read the inclosed article from to-day's "Dépêche." Your Lordship will observe that its terms are practically identical with the views expressed to me by the Resident-General. It may be taken, therefore, as recording the views of the Residency in the matter. The wording, indeed, is so similar to the language used to me by M. Millet that I think he must either have himself written the article, or, at all events, have inspired it. He simply gave me a précis of it.

In my immediately preceding despatch I showed that, according to Major Rebillet's theory, it would appear that neither the roads connecting the Turkish towns, nor the territory intervening between them, belonged to the Turks. I half hesitated to express this view, obvious as it seemed to me, for the claim appeared so preposterous, but the "Dépêche" of to-day has no such timidity. It follows the argument out boldly to its logical conclusion, and sums it up in the following definite terms:—

"Sans doute, dans cet hinterland Français, les Turcs occupent deux ou trois points: Ghadamès, depuis 1840; Rhat, depuis 1874. Cette occupation constitue des faits accomplis devant lesquels nous nous inclinons. Mais en dehors de ces points où ils tiennent garnison, le pays ouvert, les points d'eau, les routes, et les pâturages ne leur appartiennent pas."

There can be no mistaking those words, but one wonders why they are written. I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 40.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 24, 1896.

CHACUN sait qu'on appelle "hinterland" d'un pays la région intérieure qui en relève géographiquement et politiquement.

L'hinterland de la Tunisie, comme celui de l'Algérie, notre voisine, et des autres pays de la côte Méditerranéenne, se prolonge ainsi, à travers le Sahara, jusqu'au Soudan. Cette vérité, admise du reste partout, ressort avec évidence de ce que la vaste et quasi-déserte bande du Sahara, sans valeur et presque sans vie par elle-même, est une simple région de transit, une sorte de grande voie de communication jalonnée de points d'eau entre le Centre Africain et les pays riverains de la Méditerranée.

Reste donc à déterminer seulement, dans le partage du Sahara en hinterlands particuliers, la part qui doit revenir à chacun des divers possesseurs des côtes Méditerranéennes.

Or, géographiquement, rien de plus aisé.

Nous disions tout à l'heure que la seule valeur du Sahara se tire des différentes voies qui le traversent, aboutissant, d'un côté, au Soudan; de l'autre, aux divers territoires Méditerranéens. Mais toutes ces voies ont la direction des méridiens. Il n'y a donc qu'à prolonger, dans le Sahara, les méridiens extrêmes des pays de la côte pour déterminer les limites de leur hinterland respectif.

D'après ces principes, la part d'hinterland Saharien qui revient à la Tunisie occupe toute la région située à l'ouest du méridien de Zarzis-Dehiba prolongé. Par conséquent, toute la voie commerciale Saharienne actuelle, qui vient de Kano par Rhat et Ghadamès, et qui suit en moyenne le méridien du Kef à Gafsa, est bien comprise dans les limites de l'hinterland Tunisien.

Du reste, le plus court débouché du Sahara vers la côte Méditerranéenne se trouve dans la direction du lac Tunisien des Bibans. De Ghadamès à ce point on ne compte, à vol d'oiseau, que 400 kilom., tandis que de Ghadamès à Tripoli, il y en a 500, soit une distance un quart plus longue que celle aboutissant à la côte Tunisienne.

Si l'on compare les deux chemins, non plus au point de vue des distances, mais à celui de la facilité, la route Tunisienne l'emporte bien davantage encore sur l'autre et parce qu'elle est la plus directe et parce qu'elle quitte plus tôt les régions désolées pour entrer dans la zone côtière relativement peuplée, riche en eau et présentant des moyens de subsistance.

En un mot, la voie Saharienne actuelle, celle que suivait le Marquis de Morès, continuellement parcourue par les caravanes qui viennent à Tatahouine et qui en partent, seule route Saharienne qui desserve la Régence, située dans le prolongement de son méridien, fait bien partie de l'hinterland géographique de la Tunisie.

La Tripolitaine n'en saurait dire autant. Cette route, en effet, n'est point située sur le méridien prolongé du seul débouché qu'offre le vilayet voisin, Tripoli, et ne dessert aucun de ses centres.

L'hinterland, avons-nous dit, est cette arrière-région qui relève géographiquement et politiquement du pays placé devant.

Eh bien, si géographiquement toute la bande Saharienne à l'ouest du méridien de Zarzis relève ainsi de la Tunisie, elle en relève beaucoup plus encore politiquement.

Rappelons d'abord, ce que beaucoup ignorent, qu'une fraction de la tribu Tunisienne d'El-Ourgemma possède un droit seigneurial incontestable sur toutes les oasis situées à l'ouest de la Tripolitaine jusqu'au delà du neuvième méridien, et spécialement sur Ouarzen, Nalout, Sinaoun, Derdje, Bir-Zar, Bir-Tiaret, &c., c'est-à-dire sur tout cet hinterland Tunisien qui nous occupe. Ces droits seigneuriaux, qui placent les indigènes de ces différentes oasis dans un état réel de servage vis-à-vis des El-Ourgemma, et font des Ourgemma les propriétaires principaux de toute cette région, mettent ainsi la Tunisie, par rapport à la Tripolitaine, dans une situation privilégiée à laquelle le Gouvernement du Protectorat aurait réellement tort—suivant les conclusions d'une brochure très curieuse sur cette question de M. A. Goguyer—de ne pas donner la plus solennelle et la plus indiscutable consécration.

Cette consécration d'ailleurs ne fera que venir en confirmation des arrangements internationaux réglant l'appropriation de l'hinterland Saharien.

La Convention Franco-Anglaise du 5 Août, 1890, Article II, reconnaît, en effet, comme formant la zone soumise à l'influence Française, tout le sud de nos possessions Méditerranéennes jusqu'à la ligne Say sur le Niger et Baroua sur le Lac Tchad.

Or, la partie du Sahara, limitée par ces lignes, et qui nous est ainsi politiquement attribuée, est sensiblement identique à celle qui relève géographiquement de nos possessions Algériennes et Tunisiennes.

Sans doute, dans cet hinterland Français, les Turcs occupent deux ou trois points: Ghadamès, depuis 1840; Rhat, depuis 1874. Cette occupation constitue des faits accomplis devant lesquels nous nous inclinons. Mais, en dehors de ces points où ils tiennent garnison, le pays ouvert, les points d'eau, les routes et les pâturages ne leur appartiennent point. Ils n'ont dessus aucun droit et n'ont du reste jamais songé à en réclamer aucun, ni à y faire acte d'autorité.

C'est ainsi qu'en 1862, le Gouvernement Français traita directement avec les Touaregs de ces contrées sans soulever la moindre objection du Gouvernement Ottoman; c'est ainsi que jamais il n'est venu à l'idée de la France de demander réparation à ce Gouvernement pour les massacres nombreux et les brigandages sans nombre commis sur nos nationaux, ou nos protégés, par les Touaregs Azdjer de ces mêmes régions. C'est pour cela qu'elle ne demandera pas davantage compte à sa voisine de Tripoli du sang Français et du sang Tunisien qui viennent de couler de nouveau à El-Ouatia.

El-Ouatia est en plein Sahara, sur territoire Touareg, et, par conséquent, il appartient à la zone soumise à l'action directe de la France et non à la Tripolitaine.

Les cartes, quelles qu'elles soient, qui, au-dessous d'Ogla-Djeneyen, présentent une ligne figurant la frontière entre la Tripolitaine et la Tunisie sont donc vicieuses. Cette frontière n'existe pas. Dans le Sahel, entre la mer et Djeneyen, la frontière a été déterminée soigneusement et discutée point par point. Rien de pareil n'a été fait ni ne pouvait être fait au sud de Djeneyen. Les Turcs, en effet, y possèdent trois points: Ghadamès, Sinaoun, et Djerdj; mais, en dehors de là, tout le reste du pays, dans les limites que nous avons précisées plus haut, relève de l'influence Française et fait incontestablement partie de notre hinterland Tunisien.

No. 41.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 33. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 24, 1896.

SINCE writing my despatch No. 32 of this day's date I have seen Major Rebillet, who told me that the frontier is really only actually defined as far as Debibat, where they have a military post. The Chef de Cabinet was therefore wrong the other day when he told Mr. Profeit, as I had the honour of reporting in my despatch No. 28 of the 18th instant, that Danirat was the southernmost Tunisian military post. Major Rebillet gave me some information about Djeneyen which I confess I did not grasp. The fact is that, as is perhaps not extraordinary, in view of the extensive but shadowy nature of the frontier and of the French claims, the different members of the

Residency are very mixed as to the matter and contradict one another in questions of detail.

Major Rebillet spoke very sensibly about the vengeance to be taken, saying that it was perfect nonsense to think of such a thing for the moment, but he said what might be done, and what he should like to see done, would be to erect a fort at Bir-el-Mater, the spot where M. de Morès was killed, where there is a good well.

This would give practical effect to the views expressed by the Resident-General and by him, which I have reported to your Lordship in my previous despatches, views which Major Rebillet repeated again to me at considerable length, and, though as was natural, they were couched in more moderate language than that of his chief, the substance was the same.

I called on Major Rebillet to try and see the Military Map of 1894, alluded to in my despatch No. 31 of the 22nd June, which I had tried in vain to get in Tunis. He himself had not got a copy of it, but he fully explained to me the situation. I will forward your Lordship a copy as soon as I can get one, which I am promised in a fortnight's time.

In the course of our conversation Major Rebillet alluded to the folly of the French newspapers, which were crying out for the Government to demand reparation from the Porte for the murder of the Marquis de Morès. This, he said, would at once admit the territorial right of Turkey, which they contest, and turn a purely local matter into a question of European policy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 42.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 7.)

(No. 34. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 26, 1896.

CHANCING to meet at dinner last night Major Rebillet, the Military Attaché to the Residency, to whom I have alluded in my immediately preceding despatches on the subject of the views of the French authorities with reference to the Tunis-Tripolitan frontier, he asked me if I had read in the "Dépêche" of that morning the narrative of the murder of M. de Morès, which I have the honour to inclose herewith.

On my replying in the affirmative, he said that it had been given to him by the negro, and that, from his examination of the man, he was convinced that it was a true account of the disaster. On my asking him if he had supplied it to the "Dépêche," he said that a representative of that paper was present at the examination.

This would seem to tend to confirm the opinion which I have ventured to express to your Lordship as to the direct inspiration of the different articles which I have had the honour of inclosing to your Lordship, and it will be noticed that in the remarks at the close of the narrative is reproduced the scheme which Major Rebillet, as reported in my immediately preceding despatch, had mentioned to me of erecting a fort on the spot where the Marquis de Morès fell.

It appears that the Chaâmba who were associated with the Touaregs in the crime are a revolted ("dissident") Algerian tribe, who have left their homes in Algeria and taken to the desert.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 42.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 25, 1896.

ALI SMERLI est revenu à Tunis, et, après le récit très précis et très détaillé qu'il a fait des derniers jours et de la fin de l'infortuné de Morès et de ses compagnons, nul doute n'est malheureusement possible.

Ils ont été certainement massacrés, et sont tombés victimes, en définitive, il faut le dire, ni de l'Angleterre, ni des Juifs, comme l'ont déjà déclaré, sans la moindre preuve à l'appui, des feuilles toujours bien informées, mais simplement d'une bande

de pillards Touaregs et Chaâmba, allumés par l'appât d'une richesse que de Morès avait fort imprudemment trop étalée à leurs yeux, toujours pleins de convoitise.

Cette vérité ressort, avec une lumineuse évidence, du récit très simple, mais très circonstancié pourtant, qu'a fait devant nous l'un des nègres, heureusement échappé à la catastrophe, et dont nous nous bornons à reproduire ci-dessous la narration, après avoir toutefois présenté son auteur à nos lecteurs.

Ali Smerli, donc, nègre, originaire de Tunis, est âgé d'une trentaine d'années, marié et père de famille. Grand et vigoureux, les traits réguliers et assez fins, il paraît intelligent. Il semble, dans tout le drame où il a été mêlé, s'être conduit avec une honnêteté et un dévouement parfaits.

Laissons-lui la parole.

Départ de Djeneyen.

La caravane de De Morès quitta Djeneyen le 31 Mai.

Le 1^{er} Juin elle campa sans avoir trouvé ni puits ni point d'eau.

Le 2 Juin.

Le 2 Juin, vers 3 heures du soir, après une marche pénible, on dut s'arrêter encore, sans avoir trouvé aucun puits. Comme il fallait, de toute nécessité, en trouver un le lendemain, M. de Morès envoya Abd-el-Hak, Ali de Sinaoun, Ali-el-Chambi, un Chaâmba, engagé à Djeneyen pour guider la caravane jusqu'à Rhat, et quatre guides de Nefzaoua, afin de chercher et de trouver le puits le plus proche.

Ce petit groupe partit aussitôt.

La nuit était presque arrivée lorsqu'un de ces hommes parut à l'horizon agitant son burnous. Il expliqua que ses compagnons avaient rencontré un habitant de Sinaoun, fabricant de goudron, qui leur avait offert de les conduire jusqu'au point d'eau voisin.

En revenant, toutefois, notre messenger avait entendu des coups de feu, et, croyant à une attaque, toujours à redouter dans ces parages, il engagea vivement M. de Morès à lever le camp et à marcher au secours de ses envoyés.

De Morès suivit ce conseil ; mais la nuit était complète. On traversait une région montagneuse et rocheuse, où les chameaux ne pouvaient continuer, sans danger, d'avancer dans les ténèbres.

Bon gré, mal gré, il fallut donc s'arrêter et coucher là.

Le 3 Juin.

Le lendemain matin, Mercredi, 3 Juin, nous nous remîmes en route, et nous arrivâmes promptement au puits d'El-Ouatia. Nous fûmes étonnés de n'y rencontrer ni Abd-el-Hak, ni ceux qui l'accompagnaient. Il fallut courir à leur recherche, et l'un de nous, originaire de Merzoug, partit dans ce but. Il les aperçut bientôt arrêtés près d'un puits un peu plus éloigné que celui sur le bord duquel nous étions fixés nous-mêmes. Nos camarades revinrent donc.

Abd-el-Hak amenait avec lui deux Touaregs, dont l'un nommé Bou Chaoui, qu'il avait rencontrés le matin même. Ces Touaregs, qui étaient à pied, présentés à M. de Morès, reçurent de lui le meilleur accueil. Il leur offrit du café, les fit déjeuner, les retint à dîner et à coucher au camp. Il paraissait enchanté de ces premières relations avec eux.

Dans la soirée une quinzaine d'autres Touaregs environ vinrent à notre campement. On les hébergea ; on fit cuire, en leur honneur, deux plats de couscous et un plat de riz sans viande. M. de Morès ouvrit même une boîte de thé pour leur en servir. L'heure du repos arrivée, ces gens se retirèrent un peu en dehors de notre camp.

Bou Chaoui semblait être leur chef. Il était seul à parler Arabe. Encore parlait-il cette langue assez difficilement, et d'une façon peu intelligible. Il fallait, pour le comprendre, toute la bonne volonté d'Abd-el-Hak, qui servait d'interprète entre M. de Morès et cet homme. Ses compatriotes du désert ne parlaient que leur idiome national. Aussi, seuls Hadj Ali et deux de ses serviteurs pouvaient s'entretenir avec eux.

Détail à noter : Bou Chaoui demanda des cigarettes à Abd-el-Hak. Pour les

fumer, il abaissa son voile, de sorte que Smerli put voir sa figure. C'est un homme de 40 à 45 ans, qu'il reconnaîtrait sûrement s'il se trouvait jamais placé en face de lui.

Disons aussi tout de suite que les jours suivants, pendant que nous restâmes immobilisés à El Ouatia, Bou Chaoui ne manqua pas de revenir nous voir longuement, et amena même sa petite-fille, enfant de 6 à 7 ans.

Cette visite de l'enfant ferait assez croire que le campement des Touaregs était tout proche du nôtre ; il est vrai que nous ne l'avons nullement aperçu ; mais cela tient, sans doute, à la forme et à la couleur des tentes Touaregs faites de cuir et très difficiles à distinguer, même à courte distance.

Quoi qu'il en soit, Bou Chaoui et sa fillette furent l'objet de mille attentions prévenantes. Abd-el-Hak les photographia plusieurs fois l'un et l'autre et M. de Morès fit cadeau à l'enfant de plusieurs bracelets.

Du reste, il tenait table ouverte pour tous ceux de la tribu qui venaient le voir.

Pendant que nous racontons cette journée du 3 Juin, ajoutons qu'Abd-el-Hak entama, avec un indigène de Sinaoun, qui faisait du goudron dans le voisinage du puits près duquel nous campions, des négociations en vue de la location de chameaux.

Hadj Ali discuta le prix de cette location. L'homme de Sinaoun demandait 30 fr. par 100 kilog. jusqu'à Rhat. Hadj Ali ne voulut en donner que 26 fr. Ils ne purent s'entendre et Hadj Ali entra ce même jour en pourparlers avec Bou Chaoui pour obtenir de lui les chameaux nécessaires au relèvement de ceux venus de Gabès.

Le 4 Juin.

Le Jeudi, 4 Juin, les pourparlers commencés la veille continuèrent. M. de Morès y prit part en personne, par l'intermédiaire d'Abd-el-Hak.

Du reste, pendant qu'ils se continuaient, Ali de Sinaoun et Salah, domestiques au service de El Hadj Ali partirent pour Sinaoun même afin d'acheter des cordes, des poivrons et d'autres provisions dont le besoin se faisait sentir.

Ce fut tout pour cette journée employée, comme on le voit, en causeries vagues.

Le 5 Juin.

Le lendemain (Vendredi), le camp, établi jusque là à une certaine distance du puits, en fut rapproché et fut dressé tout près du puits même.

La chose était à peine faite qu'on vit arriver huit ou neuf Chaâmba dissidents. Ils venaient abreuver leurs chameaux à notre puits.

M. de Morès se les fit présenter ; les entretint longuement ; s'informa du motif pour lequel ils avaient quitté leur pays ; leur proposa son intervention près des autorités Françaises pour les faire rentrer en grâce et alla jusqu'à leur offrir une lettre d'intercession dans ce but.

Les Chaâmba l'écoutèrent, mais refusèrent catégoriquement ses propositions et ses offres.

M. de Morès alors leur fit distribuer de la farine d'orge et un litre d'huile, qu'ils emportèrent en se retirant.

Parvenus néanmoins au puits qui se trouve à 8 ou 9 kilom. de là, entre El Ouatia et Sinaoun, ces Chaâmba, réflexion faite, renvoyèrent à M. de Morès, par un jeune garçon de 12 ans, cette huile et cette farine qu'ils avaient d'abord acceptées.

Cependant les négociations engagées, pour la location des chameaux Touaregs, avec Bou Chaoui avaient abouti. M. de Morès remit donc les arrhes convenues et annonça à ses chameliers Gabésiens qu'il les congédiait. Ceux-ci furent dans l'allégresse la plus grande ; ils étaient en effet loués pour aller jusqu'à Rhat et déjà le voyage leur semblait très pénible.

La soirée se passa, conséquemment, à ces arrangements nouveaux, en règlement de compte. M. de Morès les paya, acheta les provisions dont ils étaient munis, et qui leur devenaient inutiles, et convint avec eux qu'ils partiraient dès le lendemain. Les guides de Nefzaoua, congédiés comme les chameliers Gabésiens, furent également réglés, et partirent dans la nuit, sans même attendre le jour.

Tous ces soins n'absorbèrent pas cependant tellement M. de Morès qu'il ne reçut des femmes Chaâmba amenées par la curiosité à notre camp. Il leur remit même à

chacune 10 fr. ; cette générosité fit accourir trois Chaâmba, à chacun desquels il donna encore une pièce de 20 fr.

Le soir, enfin, deux employés du Cheikh de Sinaoun vinrent, de la part de ce fonctionnaire, demander le signalement de la caravane, mais M. de Morès les éconduisit sans rien entendre et sans vouloir leur communiquer le moindre renseignement. Ils se retirèrent donc sans être plus avancés au départ qu'à l'arrivée.

Le 6 Juin.

Dès l'aube du Samedi matin (6 Juin), les chameliers Gabésiens nous quittèrent, ainsi qu'il avait été convenu la veille.

Ali de Sinaouan et Salah, le domestique d'El Hadj Ali, n'étaient point encore revenus de Sinaoun ; nous restions donc seulement, à El Outia, sept personnes attachées à M. de Morès. En le comptant, nous étions huit en tout perdus au milieu des Touaregs et des Chaâmba.

La journée pourtant se passa tranquillement ; M. de Morès était gai, plein d'entrain et de bon humeur, à son habitude.

Il convint que les chameaux loués aux Touaregs seraient amenés le lendemain à la première heure, et il en paya la location jusqu'à Rhat.

Il profita même de la conclusion définitive de ce marché pour faire cadeau à Bou Chaoui, le porte-parole et le Chef des Touaregs, d'une carabine à répétition, d'un burnous, d'une "jebba," et de divers vêtements pour femmes.

Il avait aussi distribué à sa nouvelle escorte Touareg quatre carabines prises aux trois serviteurs noirs d'El Hadj Ali et à moi-même, continue Ali-ben-Smerli.

Pendant tous ces préparatifs nos gens étaient enfin revenus de Sinaoun, et la soirée s'achevait paisiblement lorsque des Chaâmba se présentèrent et réclamèrent à M. de Morès des cadeaux en nature analogues à ceux qu'il avait faits dans la journée à leurs voisins les Touaregs. Ils demandaient aussi des vêtements, des armes, &c. M. de Morès refusa net. Ce refus mécontenta si vivement ces Chaâmba que leur compatriote Ali-el-Chambi, engagé à Djeneyen pour guider notre caravane jusqu'à Rhat, crut devoir solliciter l'autorisation de se retirer. Déjà, probablement, il craignait de se trouver mêlé à quelque regrettable affaire.

L'incident n'eut d'ailleurs pas d'autre suite immédiate, et le Samedi se termina par l'achat aux Touaregs, pour Abd-el-Hak, d'un chameau livrable le lendemain matin avec les autres.

Le 7 Juin.

Ce lendemain matin parut, mais les chameaux ne vinrent point. On ne vit ni eux ni aucun Touareg ce jour-là.

Seuls, deux Tripolitains, réfugiés dans ces tribus nomades pour échapper aux autorités Turques, se montrèrent au camp, porteurs de deux jeunes agneaux qu'Abd-el-Hak leur acheta.

Nous reçûmes également, dans ce jour, la visite du Cheikh de Sinaoun. Il dina même au camp, et y passa la nuit. Avant de le laisser partir, M. de Morès, avec lequel il avait longuement causé, lui fit don d'une pièce d'étoffe et d'un "harram" teint en rouge.

Le 8 Juin.

Le 8 Juin, au matin, les chameaux ne paraissant pas encore, Had Ali se décida à aller les chercher.

Vers 8 heures il revint avec les chameaux attendus, huit ou neuf Touaregs, et leurs nègres chameliers.

Malheureusement, les chameaux amenés n'avaient pour tout harnachement que des bâts privés de sangles et de cordes.

Le camp fut pourtant abattu, démonté et on commença le chargement. Mais les animaux se déchargeaient à chaque instant et il était presque impossible d'assujettir les caisses et cantines sur leur dos.

Après de longs efforts, comme midi approchait, M. de Morès ordonna de décharger entièrement les bêtes et, vu l'heure trop avancée, remit le départ au lendemain.

Pourtant on ne releva point le camp ; on ne dressa point les tentes et, pour procurer un peu d'ombre à M. de Morès, on se borna à établir un tendelet entre deux caisses.

Ces contre-temps n'influaient toujours pas sur la belle humeur du chef. Il s'était toutefois rendu compte des difficultés qu'il aurait avec les Touaregs pour convoyeurs.

Le soir même, en effet, il s'en ouvrit nettement à Bou Chaoui. "Décidément," lui dit-il, "je renonce à l'idée d'aller à Rhat avec vos chameaux ; ils ne sont habitués ni à nos caisses ni à nos charges, conduisez-nous donc seulement à Sinaoun ; là je trouverai des animaux du pays qui feront mieux mon affaire. Bien entendu, vous garderez les sommes que vous avez touchées pour aller jusqu'à Rhat ; je vous les abandonne dès maintenant."

Ce fut chose convenue et les Touaregs, promettant de revenir le lendemain, quittèrent le camp à la nuit close.

Le Mardi, 9 Juin.

Dès en s'éveillant dans cette journée du Mardi, 9 Juin, qui devait se terminer si tragiquement, M. de Morès s'aperçut qu'on lui avait volé sa sacoche accrochée à une caisse. On vint l'informer également que son mehari avait disparu.

M. de Morès se plaignit amèrement de ces vols à Bou Chaoui. Un instant après, celui-ci lui fit remettre sa sacoche ; mais les papiers qu'elle contenait étaient déchirés et son cachet, moitié rouge et moitié blanc, manquait. Quant au mehari, Bou Chaoui déclara qu'il allait se mettre à sa recherche, et il disparut.

Il fallut beaucoup de temps pour procéder au chargement. Pendant cette opération, M. de Morès surprit un jeune Touareg fouillant dans ses bagages ; la patience lui manqua et il administra au voleur un coup de canne qui lui fit une légère blessure à la tête.

Vers 8 heures du matin, enfin, le chargement terminé, on se mit en marche.

Les Touaregs, au moment du départ, avaient disparu regagnant leurs tentes et laissant les chameaux seuls avec les chameliers.

Nous avançons donc avec une lenteur désespérante, obligés de relever, à chaque instant, le chargement tombé de quelqu'une des bêtes. Nous mîmes ainsi plus de deux heures à parcourir moins de 3 kilom. dans la direction d'El-Ouatia à Sinaoun.

Ordre de Marche.

En tête du convoi, sur une seule ligne, nos quarante ou quarante-cinq chameaux, flanqués, à gauche, des chameliers nègres au service des Touaregs et, à droite, des trois serviteurs nègres, d'El Hadj Ali et de Ali de Sinaoun.

A vingt pas en arrière, et à pied, Ali Smerli.

Dix pas en arrière encore, mais monté sur un chameau, Abd-el-Hak.

Trente pas plus loin, sur la gauche et à dos de mehari, M. de Morès, suivi à 80 mètres environ de distance par ses deux serviteurs Algériens, Mohamed sur sa gauche et Ahmed sur sa droite.

Enfin, à cinquante pas en arrière d'Abd-el-Hak, mais à droite, presque parallèlement à de Morès, par conséquent, El Hadj Ali sur un chameau que conduisait par la bride un domestique.

Première Attaque.

Il était donc 10 heures ou 10 heures et demie lorsque, au loin, nous vîmes arriver les Touaregs, sur leur meharis et par petits groupes.

Bientôt ils nous eurent rejoints. Ils mirent alors pied à terre et nous suivirent en tenant leurs montures.

Tout à coup, Smerli, se retournant, aperçut trois de ces Touaregs qui s'étaient approchés sans bruit et par derrière de M. de Morès et se préparaient à l'attaquer à coups de sabre.

Découverts, ils poussent des cris d'appel pendant que M. de Morès, sans perdre sa présence d'esprit, ripostait : "Qu'y a-t-il donc ? Que veut-on ?" Et comprenant trop ce qu'on voulait, tira son revolver de sa ceinture, ajustait les bandits, en tuait un et blessait les deux autres, l'un grièvement, le second moins gravement.

Il était temps, car les agresseurs étaient si près de lui qu'au moment même où il

les mettait en joue, l'un d'eux, d'un coup de sabre, l'avait atteint au-dessus du poignet droit.

Devant cette agression, Smerli avait rejoint Abd-el-Hak, qui, descendu de chameau, avait saisi sa carabine que lui tendait le nègre et avait, avec lui, couru à l'aide de M. de Morès.

Smerli avait pris la bride du chameau que montait ce dernier et pendant qu'il descendait, avait dégagé sa carabine de la gaine dans laquelle elle était renfermée et la lui tendait au moment même où il mettait pied à terre.

En prenant sa carabine, M. de Morès a laissé tomber sur les vêtements de Smerli deux gouttes du sang s'échappant de sa blessure; elles y sont encore très visibles.

Attaque Générale.

Cependant, de Morès cria : "Aux chameaux ! aux chameaux !" en indiquant de la main qu'il faut, à tout prix, les arrêter et les faire agenouiller.

C'était du reste la consigne donnée depuis longtemps, pour le cas à prévoir d'un désordre quelconque toujours dans la colonne.

Smerli, sans arme et dès lors inutile au salut de de Morès, court pour faire exécuter cet ordre. Mais les chameliers Touaregs rabattent vivement leurs animaux sur la droite, tandis que Chaâmba et Touaregs unis, fondent sur nous avec leurs meharis, nous font prisonniers et nous attachent.

Puis les chameliers Touaregs font agenouiller leurs bêtes et les déchargent.

Ils étaient alors à 400 mètres environ de l'endroit où Ali Smerli avait laissé de Morès.

Il le voyait de là avec Abd-el-Hak et El Hadj Ali, tous trois debout bravement et adossés à une touffe de "soboth," ces grands joncs du désert. Les deux premiers étaient armés de carabines et le troisième était sans arme. Ahmed et Mohammed, les domestiques de M. de Morès qui étaient également armés de fusils à tir rapide, avaient, dès la première attaque, été tués tous les deux sans que leurs armes aient servi.

Une heure durant à peu près, de Morès et Abd-el-Hak tinrent donc seuls tête à leurs ennemis. Pendant une heure, en effet, les crépitements de la fusillade ne cessèrent de retentir. Ils tiraient sur les Touaregs parfaitement dissimulés derrière les touffes de "soboth" dont le terrain est semé; ceux-ci, en cercle autour d'eux, les fusillaient, de leur côté, d'une distance approximative variant entre 100 et 150 mètres.

Liés au milieu des chameaux et des bagages, les hommes de de Morès ne purent assister aux détails de cette lutte épique.

Quand la fusillade ne retentit plus, seulement ils conclurent que tout était fini. Il était environ midi.

La Curée.

Touaregs et Chaâmba se précipitèrent alors sur les bagages; ils ouvrirent les ballots; ils étalèrent les marchandises et, la menace à la bouche, les armes à la main, ils forcèrent Smerli et ses camarades à leur aider à ouvrir les caisses en leur criant : "Où est l'argent ? où sont les armes ?"

Quelques instants après arriva Bou Chaoui. Il rassura les prisonniers, qui craignaient d'être égorgés; il fit enlever leurs liens et les prit à témoins qu'il n'assistait pas au massacre et que la catastrophe s'était produite pendant qu'il était à la recherche du mehari de de Morès.

Puis, avec les autres, il alla au partage des dépouilles. Smerli dut dévisser le couvercle d'une caisse pleine de sabres; une arme plus riche que les autres fut mise de côté pour le frère de Si Mohammed, un gros personnage de Rhat, paraît-il. D'autres caisses furent brisées pour aller plus vite.

Le soir, enfin, on rendit aux captifs leurs vêtements, on leur distribua une outre d'eau, mais pas de nourriture, et ils passèrent la nuit au milieu des assassins.

Le 10 Juin.

Le 10, à l'aurore, recommença la curée: Touaregs et Chaâmba se disputèrent même. Enfin ils s'entendirent et chacun prit sa part.

Bou Chaoui congédia alors les prisonniers et s'enfonça dans les solitudes du sud avec les siens.

Il pouvait être 10 heures du matin. Ali de Sinaoun rejoignit l'homme qui fabriquait le goudron et dont nous avons parlé, et lui loua un chameau qu'il ramena.

En repassant alors sur le champ du massacre, Ali Smerli et ses camarades virent, tout à leur aise, les malheureuses victimes et les reconnurent.

Les Cadavres.

Hadj Ali, frappé d'une balle au front et d'une autre à la jambe, dormait son dernier sommeil la tête appuyée sur son bras droit.

Abd-el-Hak atteint d'un coup de feu au côté droit de la poitrine avait, en outre, le flanc gauche percé de la lance d'un Touareg. Il était couché sur le dos, attestant le ciel qu'il avait lutté en vaillant et qu'il était mort en brave.

Les deux serviteurs Algériens de de Morès: Ahmed et Mohammed, tués dès le début du drame, gisaient l'un sur le dos, l'autre sur le ventre.

Quant à M. de Morès, chef de la caravane, Français, ancien officier, il s'était conduit jusqu'au bout en chef, en officier, et en Français; il s'était battu en lion et, jusque dans le trépas, ses misérables assassins l'avaient distingué de ses compagnons; son cadavre était tellement criblé de blessures qu'il était impossible de distinguer celles qui provenaient d'armes à feu de celles faites à l'arme blanche. On avait dû s'acharner sur lui et lui faire expier, jusqu'après sa mort, ses titres de Chrétien, de Français, et de maître.

Il était là pourtant, étendu sur le ventre, les bras allongés en avant comme pour prendre une éternelle possession de cette terre arrosée de son sang et qu'il avait rêvé, dans ses rêves généreux, de conquérir à la France et à la civilisation.

Épilogue.

Dors en paix, Morès, ton vœu sera peut-être accompli plus vite que tu ne le croyais toi-même et plus vite que ta vie et ton passage à travers le désert ne l'eussent réalisé!

La France va sentir le besoin impérieux de faire un pas décisif de plus sur le chemin du Soudan, de protéger, par un établissement durable, plus avancé que ceux d'aujourd'hui, les routes qui lui appartiennent. Aussi, là même où ton sang a coulé, espère que demain les couleurs de la patrie, que tu portais avec toi, flotteront dans l'azur qui a répercuté ses derniers cris et tes derniers soupirs et qu'un fort, portant ton nom, apprendra aux bandits du désert que leur règne est fini.

En attendant, tes os vont revenir avec ceux de tes compagnons et Tunis les saluera dans quelques jours, avant la mère patrie, avec un respect et une admiration unanimes.

La Fin.

Deux mots pour finir. Ali Smerli et ses camarades gagnèrent rapidement Sinaoun. Le 10 au soir, ils couchèrent dans un des villages voisins de ce centre.

Le 11, ils y passèrent la journée dans la demeure de l'un d'eux: Ali de Sinaoun.

Le Vendredi, Ali Smerli repartit à dos de chameau pour Dahiba et Tataouine, d'où il est arrivé, le 22 au soir, à Tunis.

No. 43.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 35. Confidential.)

My Lord,

IN a private letter which I have received from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli he says, with reference to the murder of M. de Morès, "the Turkish authorities do not take any interest in the case as they regard it as having happened on Touareg territory."

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It will be observed that this view of the case very much simplifies the French policy which I have explained in my previous despatches on the subject, for, as it goes, it exactly coincides with that of the French authorities here; and, as the Turks and French agree on this point, it is presumably the affair of no one else, though possibly this may not be quite the Italian view. But the French go a step further and say, What is Touareg country is our country, and though, if, with the view of avoiding responsibility for M. de Morès' murder, or for any other reason, the Turks readily give up to the Touaregs their territorial claims, it remains to be seen whether they will be equally pleased when they realize that this will mean handing these claims over to France. That they will then not be so pleased would seem to be indicated by another fact which Mr. Jago mentions confidentially to me. He says that the Governor-General was recently very indignant at the French Consul-General having made a complaint on behalf of some Touaregs who had been plundered near Ghadames by a mixed band of other Touaregs and Tripoli Arabs, as he, no doubt rightly, considered this as an attempt to assert French protection over the Touaregs, and said that it was most to the interest of the Turks to keep in well with the Touaregs as the prosperity of Tripoli depended upon their so doing, they being in possession of all the trade routes to the Soudan. There can be no doubt but that the Governor-General is right in this view. In my various conversations the Residency have specially dwelt on the importance to Tunis of commanding the trade routes, and the articles in the "Dépêche," which I have forwarded to your Lordship, have emphasised this equally strongly, while in previous despatches I have had the honour of pointing to the efforts that the French are making to divert this trade from and through Tripoli into and through Tunis, the successful accomplishment of which scheme would mean the commercial ruin of Tripoli.

If one can believe the "Dépêche" this is already very considerable, as in an article which it published some time back it laid claim to the fact that over 100 caravans entered Tunisian territory from the Soudan during the last half-year. This is possibly true, but the inference thereby conveyed of a large transit trade is not, I believe, to be accepted.

Numbers of small caravans of Touaregs do arrive at Tatahouine—a military post and market established by the French about 20 miles from Donirat—but they, as it would appear, only carry on local traffic, bringing matting, hides, gum, &c., and bartering these for grain. As far as I can ascertain, my previous reports on this subject have been verified, and very few caravans go on to Gabes with the real produce of the interior, ivory, gold dust, &c.—all of which at present passes through Tripoli.

Still, the fact that caravans pass at all into Tunisian territory shows that the roads are open, and, the distance to the sea through Tunis being considerably shorter, it would seem that if the French succeed in overcoming by some means or other the disinclination of the Touaregs there is no reason why they should not succeed in diverting the trade, and, though M. de Morès' murder may give a temporary check to the movement, the building of a fort on the spot where he fell cannot but, in the long run, aid in the development of the French schemes. It would seem that if the Turks tamely submit to this on the ground that the territory is not theirs but the Touaregs, they will simply be playing the French game.

As far as I can see the diversion of the Soudan trade from Tripoli to Tunis will not affect us commercially so long as we uphold our Treaty here, or so long as France does not annex the Regency and repudiate it, for under that Treaty our goods enter Tunis as they also enter Tripoli at the same tariff, 8 per cent, but, of course, if our Treaty be given up or repudiated after the trade route has been diverted, both our present Tunis and Tripoli trade—which, under present circumstances, admits of so much future development—would be practically lost.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 44.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 36.)

My Lord,

Tunis, June 30, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith an account of the Touareg and Chaamba tribes—parties from which murdered M. de Morès—taken from the "Dépêche," which I have ventured to think might be of interest at this moment.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 44.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of June 29, 1896.

IL nous semble intéressant de donner à nos lecteurs quelques détails sur les deux groupes de nomades qui viennent d'attirer de nouveau sur eux l'attention du monde entier par le massacre du malheureux de Morès et de ses infortunés compagnons. Nous avons nommé les Touaregs et les Chaamba.

Le nom de Touareg est le nom d'une famille Saharienne, qui occupe tout le Sahara.

Les Touaregs, en réalité, se partagent en quatre fractions très distinctes, dont deux méridionales et deux septentrionales.

Les deux fractions du nord, les seules qui soient en contact avec nos possessions Méditerranéennes, sont les Touaregs Hoggar à l'ouest, au sud de l'Algérie, et les Touaregs Azdjer à l'est, plus spécialement, par conséquent, au sud de la Tunisie. La limite entre Hoggar et Azdjer suit à peu près la route transsaharienne de Ouargla à Kano par la Sebka d'Amadghor, route qui suivait le Colonel Flatters en 1881.

Le Gouvernement d'Algérie tend à la faire revivre, et peut être elle serait la meilleure pour gagner le Soudan si la rivalité des deux tribus entre lesquelles elle est tracée ne la rendait des plus dangereuses. C'est ainsi que Flatters, guidé par les Azdjer, fut massacré à Bir el Garamar par leurs rivaux les Hoggar.

Plus récemment, M. Foureau dut aussi reculer devant la même hostilité des Hoggar contre les Azdjer qui l'accompagnaient.

Quoiqu'il en soit, les Azdjer, qui nous intéressent plus particulièrement, sont des Berbères complètement Islamisés, et parlant leur langue d'origine.

M. de Behagle était donc dans une complète erreur lorsque, au cours de sa récente Conférence à Tunis, il affirmait qu'avec la langue Arabe on pouvait traverser toute le désert et tout l'Afrique. La vérité est que l'interprète de M. de Morès lui-même, ce pauvre Abd-el-Hak, qui pourtant était un indigène, et connaissait sa langue, n'a pu entrer en relations avec les Touaregs, et que, seuls, El Hadj Ali, avec deux de ses domestiques qui parlaient cet idiome absolument différent de l'Arabe, ont pu entrer en relations avec eux.

Au nombre de 20,000 environ, sur un territoire grand comme la France, et si infertile que l'approvisionnement de la nourriture de chaque jour est pour eux un problème constant, les Touaregs ont littéralement toujours faim.

Cette faim qui les aiguillonne toujours, et ce pressant besoin de trouver la nourriture indispensable, constituent le mobile le plus puissant et le plus général des actions des Touaregs.

Ils sont divisés en tribus ayant chacune un Chef ou Amenokal; les tribus elles-mêmes sont réunies dans une confédération que préside un Amgar fédéral. Ces charges sont héréditaires dans certaines familles; elles n'emportent du reste, la plupart du temps, ni autorité, ni fonctions. Pour que l'autorité des Chefs devienne effective, il faut que la solidarité de race, poussée chez ces peuplades à sa dernière limite, fasse lever toute la confédération dans le but de faire venger l'injure ou les sévices infligés à quelqu'un de ses membres. La réparation obtenue, ou la vengeance satisfaite, la tribu se disperse de nouveau et l'autorité un instant écoutée, de l'Amenokal ou de l'Amgar, s'évanouit de rechef.

Du reste, ce n'est pas seulement une extrême solidarité de race qui distingue

les Touareg : c'est tout autant, sinon plus encore peut être, un exclusivisme de race absolu.

Tout ce qui n'est pas eux ne compte pas. Ils se croient tout permis vis-à-vis de l'étranger quel qu'il soit, et si, entre eux, ils se piquent de parole et d'une certaine loyauté, ils estiment qu'ils sont complètement affranchis de toutes ces règles morales dès qu'ils n'ont plus affaire à l'un des leurs. Le mensonge, la trahison, le guet-apens, le meurtre même d'une femme, l'assassinat avec toutes les aggravations possibles leurs paraissent alors naturels et de bonne guerre.

C'est ainsi, dans le massacre de l'expédition de Morès, par exemple, que nous avons vu les Chaamba refuser de manger avec le trop confiant explorateur, et lui renvoyer même, intacts, par un enfant, l'huile et l'orge qu'il leur avait donnés. Ils estimaient, dans leur reste de pudeur, qu'ils ne pouvaient être, à aucun titre, les hôtes de l'homme dont ils tramaient déjà la perte.

Les Touareg n'ont pas de ces scrupules. Ils mangent et boivent avec de Morès. Ils acceptent son couscous et son riz ; ils fument ses cigarettes et hument délicieusement les gorgées parfumées de son thé Chinois. Toutes ces marques d'amitié enlèvent la défiance de la victime dont ils convoitent ardemment les dépouilles et le sang et, par conséquent, ils les prodiguent lâchement et sans remord.

Il faut donc avec eux se défier toujours, évitant d'une part l'emploi de la violence à laquelle leurs mehari qui peuvent franchir couramment chaque jour 120 kilom. avec des aiguades distantes de huit jours et pour toute nourriture le paturage saharien, les soustrairaient facilement et, d'autre part, se gardant d'une confiance dont ils abusent immédiatement.

Ajoutons sur ces Azdgers que tous les membres adultes de la tribu prennent part à la discussion de toutes les questions qui intéressent les membres de la Confédération ou la Confédération tout entière ; qu'ils sont régis par un code de coutumes et de lois antiques très simple ; qu'ils sont monogames, et que la femme chez eux, réellement considérée, a, pour ainsi dire, le monopole de l'instruction.

Ces Azdgers sont maîtres de la route que suivait de Morès. Tout ce que nous revendiquons comme "Hinterland Tunisien" leur appartient et bien loin que le Gouvernement Tripolitain exerce sur eux la moindre autorité, ce sont leurs tribus, au contraire, qui règnent, en réalité, sur plusieurs des points même où flotte le pavillon Turc, notamment à Ghadamès et à Rhat.

Les Ghadamésiens, en effet, paient aux Azdgers une redevance annuelle et à Rhat, les Turcs, enfermés dans leur caserne fortifiée, sont obligés, les jours de marché, d'abandonner la ville à ces Touareg qui y commandent en maîtres absolus.

Quant aux Chaamba, leurs tribus occupent surtout l'Hinterland Algérien, au sud de Ouargla.

M. le Commandant Rebillet, qui s'occupe très activement depuis de nombreuses années des affaires indigènes, et fut même sur le point de partir avec la Mission Flatters, porte à 5,000 environ le nombre des Chaamba.

Ils se divisent, paraît-il, en trois fractions principales : les Chambet Berazegua (de Metlily), les Chambet-el-Mahdy (de Gueléa), à l'ouest des premiers, et les Chambet bou Rouba, au sud d'Ouargla.

Ils se considèrent, du reste, avec les Souafa Algériens, comme les maîtres de l'Erg jusqu'aux portes de Ghadamès ; ils poussent leurs troupeaux et leurs campements jusqu'à la limite des puits Bir Reçof, Rhardeïa, Bir Bothim ; ils nient même que la petite oasis de Sidi Maâbed, à 3 kilom. au nord-ouest de Ghadamès, soit une dépendance de cette ville, et soit placée sous l'autorité Turque.

En 1854, la conquête d'Ouargla, faite pour notre compte par la tribu vénérée des Oulad Sidi Cheikh, rangea sous notre autorité la plupart des Chaamba, leurs serviteurs religieux.

Après le massacre de la Mission Flatters, ces tribus Chaamba furent lancées contre les Touareg, et leur firent pendant quelque temps une guerre acharnée.

L'explorateur Foureau, qui, dans ses voyages, a presque toujours eu des Chaamba pour guides et pour escorte, n'a jamais eu à se plaindre de leur loyauté. Il raconte même, qu'un soir, il entendit des Touaregs Azdger, venus dans son camp et bien traités par lui, proposer à ces hommes de l'assassiner, ce qu'ils refusèrent avec indignation.

Les Chaamba qui ont pris part au massacre de M. de Morès et de ses compagnons font partie d'un groupe de ces Chaamba qui sont dissidents et qui, enfants perdus du désert, se sont soustraits à notre autorité après plus d'un méfait.

Refoulés sans cesse dans l'intérieur par la construction des postes de Bis-Reçof, d'El-May, du Fort MacMahon, du Fort Miribel, du Fort Beauprêtre, et par la création d'escadrons de Méharistes chargés de la police du désert, on ne les rencontre plus maintenant que, comme de Morès les a rencontrés lui-même, lancés en razzias lointaines à travers le Sahara, et cherchant à surprendre quelque caravane mal gardée.

Ces dissidents forment ainsi plutôt une association de pillards qu'une tribu désertique proprement dite.

No. 45.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 10.)

(No. 37. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 1, 1896.

MY Italian colleague has just informed me that his Agent at Gabes has reported that preparations are being made by the garrison there for the starting of an expedition to avenge the death of the Marquis de Morès.

If this information be correct (and M. Machiavalli believes it), the aim of this expedition may, for the present at all events, only be the erection of the fort on the spot where M. de Morès fell, to which I have had the honour of alluding in my previous despatches ; but if the column is, as it quite possibly may be, attacked by the Touaregs, it is difficult to foretell what may happen.

Sinavon, near where M. de Morès fell, is about 180 miles, or, say, twelve days' march from Gabes.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 46.

Mr. Howard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 13.)

(No. 210.)

My Lord,

Paris, July 12, 1896.

WITH reference to your Lordship's despatch No. 257 of the 7th instant respecting the death of the Marquis de Morès, and a probable military expedition against the Touaregs, I have the honour to transmit herewith an extract from the "Politique Coloniale," stating that the Ministry of Foreign Affairs had denied that there was any truth in the report sent from Tunis to the Italian Agency, that M. Millet had left for Paris in order to consult M. Hanotaux as to the expediency of sending an expedition to subdue the tribes implicated in the massacre of the Morès' Mission.

I have, &c.

(Signed) HENRY HOWARD.

Inclosure in No. 46.

Extract from the "Politique Coloniale" of July 9, 1896.

UNE dépêche de Tunis, adressée à l'Agence Italienne, annonçait que M. Millet était parti pour Paris afin de conférer avec M. Hanotaux sur l'opportunité d'une expédition destinée à soumettre les tribus qui ont pris part au massacre de la Mission Morès.

Cette nouvelle est absolument inexacte, comme l'indique une note officielle du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères.

No. 47.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 38. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 1, 1896.

THE French Residency here is, I think, heartily ashamed of the Morès fiasco, and I have never seen M. Millet so subdued in speaking of any subject as he is on this. It is true that in the "Dépêche," for the sake of popularity, I suppose, Morès is talked of as a sort of hero, but in private he is now described as a madman, and yet he was no more mad at the moment of his death than he was when his "conférence" of violent abuse of England was attended and applauded by all that is most important and serious amongst the French Government officials in Tunis, or than when, with the active aid of the Government, he made his preparations for a journey, the aim of which was avowedly to attack us.

It is true that now the Residency say that they did all they could to stop him, but this is obviously incorrect. He could not have hired a camel without the permission of the authorities. With the view of stopping travellers, like Mr. Sloane Stanley, strict orders had, I am informed, been given that no camels should be supplied without permission, therefore M. de Morès could not have gone without it. In fact, to any one who knows this country at all, such a contention is simply puerile.

Speaking to me this morning, M. Millet, by way of pointing to M. de Morès' folly, actually instanced the circumstances of the "conférence" saying that no one but a man who was mad would have proposed to the meeting such a resolution as that which he had proposed, and that, having done this, no gentleman would have forwarded to your Lordship, for communication to the Queen, "le hôte de France," such a resolution as that which he put and which was carried.

I could not help being amused by M. Millet's remark, recollecting, as I did, that only a short time back, as I informed your Lordship in my despatch No. 19 of the 29th May, his adjoint, his *alter ego*, as he called him on his arrival, M. Révoil, denied that any such resolution had ever been put to the meeting. This gave me an opportunity of saying that I quite agreed with M. Millet as to the impropriety of M. de Morès' conduct, and of adding that it was a pity that undue importance should have been given to such a man, to such conduct, and specially to such views as was afforded by the presence at his lecture of, and the applause with which it was received by, the audience, composed of so many persons and *personnages* who actually carried by acclamation the resolution which M. Millet so justly characterised. Not even one man, I said, got up and left the room as a protest.

M. Millet's reply was characteristic. He said that they were a lot of "imbéciles." As I thought that he was doubtless the best judge of the intellectual capacity of the General commanding the forces here and of his own Ministers and Heads of Departments I made no reply to this candid confession, and allowed the subject to drop.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 48.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 40. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 7, 1896.

AFTER my Italian colleague had communicated to me the intelligence received from his Agent at Gabès with reference to preparations in course of arrangement at Gabès for a punitive expedition which I had the honour of reporting in my despatch No. 37 of the 1st instant, I lost no time in telegraphing to the British Consular Agent there to inquire whether he could confirm this.

On his replying that no such preparations were being made, I called on my Italian colleague and informed him of the result of my inquiry.

M. Machiavelli replied that his Agent was so convinced of the certainty of his intelligence that he had first of all telegraphed it, and followed this up by a detailed Report which he read to me, to the effect that orders had been received by the Commander of the troops to hold himself in readiness to start, and that these orders were

being executed. The Italian Agent mentioned cannon also somewhat vaguely, and added that the erection of a fort was in contemplation for which those cannon were intended, but, as far as I could gather from M. Machiavelli's quick reading, he did not seem to know where the fort was to be.

M. Machiavelli appeared to rely upon his Agent's accuracy in the main, though he said his Report might possibly be a little exaggerated, and added that he mixed a good deal with the officers, and in that way picked up valuable information. He seemed, however, to think that whatever expedition might be in contemplation, it would probably be deferred to a more favourable season of the year.

Until lately the British Vice-Consul at Susa was at Gabès, so I could rely upon the accuracy of reports from that place. He has unfortunately lately left that town, and though Mr. Callija may be quite right in this case, I cannot place the same reliance on his information as when he was helped and directed by Mr. Galea.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 49.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 41. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 8, 1896.

IN more than one of my despatches of last year and the beginning of this I had the honour of alluding to the probability of Italy falling back on the privileges reserved to her in Tunis under the Capitulations in the event of the denunciation by the Beylical Government of her Treaty not being followed by another equally satisfactory arrangement.

So far we hear nothing of such an arrangement having been made, and this opinion, which I have ventured to express, has now received the official confirmation of the Italian Minister for Foreign Affairs, who, speaking in the Italian Chamber on the 1st instant, made the following statement:—

"In consequence of its denunciation notified last year, the Italo-Tunisian Treaty of Commerce will terminate on the 29th of next September. But besides this Treaty exist the Capitulations, save the suspended Consular jurisdiction." This declaration has made a considerable sensation here, specially among the Italian Colony, who look on it as the most important statement which has been made with reference to Tunis since the French occupation. Your Lordship may recollect that, as reported in my despatch No. 74 of the 30th September of last year, M. Machiavelli, in acknowledging the receipt of the note from the French Residency denouncing the Treaty, had stated that, in addition to the ancient Treaties, Italy would in future base her position on the Capitulations, but it is just possible that the recent events on the Tripolitan frontier, and the attention directed to them by M. de Morès' sensational expedition, and its still more sensational termination, may not have been wholly without influence at this moment in determining this important public declaration.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 50.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 43. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 11, 1896.

MY Italian colleague has informed me that M. Hanotaux has stated to the Italian Ambassador in Paris that the French Government has no intention of sending an expedition to avenge the death of M. de Morès.

This would appear to confirm the remarks to the same effect made to me by the Military Attaché to the French Residency which I had the honour to report in my despatch No. 33 of the 24th ultimo.

M. Machiavelli further told me that in remarking to his Government on this statement, he had observed that it would have been still more satisfactory if

M. Hanotaux had at the same time stated that there was no intention of making any further encroachments in the direction of Tripoli, or of erecting a fort.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 51.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received July 20.)

(No. 44. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 14, 1896.

WITH reference to the information which Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli gave me in a private letter, as reported to your Lordship in my despatch No. 35 of the 30th June, that the Turks themselves asserted that the Marquis de Morès was murdered on Touareg, not on Turkish territory, he has now informed me that in a subsequent conversation the Governor-General reiterated that statement to him, quoting "our Treaty with France of 1890 in support of his contention," that is to say, that he accepts the French contention that the Touaregs are not only not Turkish subjects, but are actually already French subjects. Thus, every one will be pleased all round.

Mr. Jago goes on to say that he does not think that the erection of a fort where Morès fell will injure Tripoli trade for a long time to come, as the Tripoli traders go to Ghadamès through Jifsin, Megda, &c., a long way to the east, and all well within recognized Tripoli territory.

I cannot pretend to the local knowledge or experience of Mr. Jago, but I do know that the avowed object of the French in building the proposed fort at El-Ouatia is to command the country round, and the routes into and out of Ghadamès. They are now apparently at one with the Turks in saying that the Touaregs round Ghadamès are not Turkish subjects, and also, if the Governor-General understood the full force of his own argument, that they are French subjects; therefore, the territory and routes they occupy and traverse up to the gates of Ghadamès are French.

Now, it can hardly be questioned that the erection of a fort in the neighbourhood of Ghadamès, to be subsequently succeeded by other military posts still closer to that place, will have the effect of turning this theory into an accomplished fact, and if they can succeed in doing this, it really would seem not to matter whether the main length of the route is uninfluenced and uninfluenceable by the French so long as that part of it nearest to Ghadamès, if only a few miles, or a mile or less in length, be liable to their interruption or domination. Ghadamès is the junction or emporium, and if the French once get command of the smallest possible part of the roads connecting it with the outer world, they can turn the stream of commerce in the direction that they choose; they can, in fact, cut off the communications with Tripoli and direct them towards Gabès, and this is what they mean to do.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 52.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 4.)

(No. 46. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 17, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a paragraph from the "Dépêche Tunisienne," reporting that the English fleet had been executing before Bizerta certain manœuvres, the object of which was the complete blockade of that port.

I have thought it advisable to call the attention of the Délégué to this paragraph, which by quotation without comment from the "Courrier de Bizerte" has lent its authority to the statement that the English Mediterranean Squadron had been practising the operation of blockading the port of Bizerta.

As in view of that authority this ridiculous assertion was generally believed here, and gave rise to a great deal of comment, angry on the part of the French, exultant on the part of the Italians—the "Unione," the leading Italian paper, in commenting on what it

called this "importantissima" piece of intelligence, expressing the latter feeling in a sarcastic article, and making great political capital out of the imaginary incident—in showing it to M. Révoil I pointed out what seemed to me to be the inadvisability of allowing the "Dépêche" to indulge in these erratic statements, and suggested that it might be well in this case, in the common interest, to make it publish a contradiction.

M. Révoil agreed with me, and said that when a report of the circumstance arrived from the Civil Contrôleur at Bizerta he would have it inserted in *extenso* in the "Dépêche," and thus give the most official denial possible to a statement at once unjustifiable and injurious. In the meanwhile, your Lordship will see by the inclosed cutting from to-day's "Dépêche" that he lost no time in taking steps to have the statement unofficially contradicted by that paper in a paragraph in which attention is specially called to the fact that it was only quoting the "Courrier de Bizerte."

M. Révoil then informed me that, as the result of the representations which I had instructed the British Vice-Consul to make to the Chef de Cabinet with reference to the paragraphs that had appeared in the native paper "El Bacira," appealing to Mahomedan fanaticism against the English, the editor of that paper had received a very severe reprimand. I expressed my satisfaction at this, and added that I had acted the part of a true friend in calling the attention of the Beylical Government to the dangerous character of such appeals, as, when it came to questions of Mahomedan fanaticism, we Christians were all in the same boat—a remark to which M. Révoil assented, and on which he enlarged.

The conversation, which was of the most friendly character throughout, then turned to M. de Morès' murder, and the circumstances accompanying and following that incident. M. Révoil began to abuse M. Béhagle, who, as I had the honour of reporting to your Lordship in my despatch No. 18 of the 29th May last, gave a "Conférence" here, to which he was introduced by the Minister of Agriculture. M. Révoil said it was disgraceful that a man who had thus received the official hospitality of the Beylical Government should subsequently give utterance to the sentiments that he had done in a letter published in the press. In this statement I cordially agreed, but ascertained subsequently that we were at cross purposes, as M. Béhagle's accusations against the Beylical Government of supineness in interest in M. de Morès' expedition was what M. Révoil chiefly complained of, while although I sympathized with him in the injustice of M. Béhagle's accusing the Beylical Government of not having given every possible help to M. de Morès, what seemed specially objectionable to me was that, writing as an authority on the matter—an authority which had been confirmed by his official recognition here—he deliberately accused England of having, through the "Consul" Arbib, murdered M. de Morès as during the last Nile expedition we had murdered Olivier Pain. With reference to this statement, I said to M. Révoil that, apart from the ridiculous accusation of complicity in M. de Morès' death, the recklessness of M. Béhagle, an accepted authority on African affairs, fairly astounded me, for he must have known, or could have ascertained with the greatest ease, that Mr. Arbib was not an English Consul, while it was as distinctly proved as was possible by the testimony of disinterested un-English eye-witnesses that Olivier Pain died a natural death in the camp of the Mahdi, and all the circumstances of his death had been widely published. I added that I did not suppose that we should have offered any objection to M. de Morès joining the Mahdi by the regular Nile route, save perhaps in the interest of his own safety.

While speaking perfectly openly to M. Révoil, I was very careful both in the manner and matter of my remarks to avoid wounding his *amour-propre*, and at the close of our long interview was glad to see by the cordiality of his own manner and remarks that I had not been unsuccessful in my endeavour, while I am not without hopes that, as in the case of the "El Bacira," the semi-official "Dépêche," which, although it rarely attacks England directly, has opened its columns widely and, it would almost seem, eagerly to the repetition of the rabid and libellous abuse with which the French and Tunisian press has been lately filled, particularly with reference to M. de Morès, may be given a hint that it is advisable that it should in future temper its patriotic indiscretions with a little attention to accuracy—at all events, in matters involving questions of international courtesy, or of European policy.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 52.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of July 13, 1896.

MANŒUVRES navales Anglaises devant Bizerte :

Nous lisons dans le "Courrier de Bizerte" :—

"Hier, 9 Juillet, depuis midi, l'escadre Anglaise, composée d'une vingtaine de navires, dont environ la moitié de gros cuirassés, a exécuté devant Bizerte des manœuvres d'ensemble dont l'objectif était de bloquer complètement le port de Bizerte. L'escadre se trouvant à peu près à la hauteur de l'île des Chiens.

"Plusieurs croiseurs sont venus explorer la côte de très près. Il était facile de suivre leurs mouvements du haut des terrasses de la ville. Qu'attend-on pour armer Bizerte?"

Inclosure 2 in No. 52.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of July 17, 1896.

LES vaisseaux "Fantômes" :

Nous avons publié, ces jours-ci, une nouvelle, empruntée, ainsi que nous le signalions, d'ailleurs, au "Courrier de Bizerte," qui a provoqué un certain émoi.

Notre confrère jetait un cri d'alarme et d'indignation en racontant que des navires de guerre Anglais étaient venus manœuvrer tout près de Bizerte, si près que, des terrasses de la ville, la population suivait leurs évolutions avec une curiosité mêlée d'anxiété.

Renseignements pris, cette affaire se réduit à des proportions beaucoup moins graves.

Notre confrère a regardé les choses par le bout très grossissant d'une très forte lunette.

En réalité, pas un Bizertin n'a aperçu, de sa terrasse ni d'ailleurs, l'ombre d'une escadre procédant à l'ombre d'une manœuvre quelconque.

Les guetteurs du sémaphore du Cap Blanc, venus à Bizerte pour se ravitailler, ont raconté à quelques personnes qu'ils avaient aperçu, à l'aide d'un de leurs puissants instruments d'optique, trois ou quatre jours auparavant, des navires en ligne, très éloignés, mais paraissant d'une forte puissance. Ils avaient conjecturé que c'était l'escadre Anglaise revenant, comme chacun le sait, de faire une petite visite d'inspection aux ports Italiens.

Ce cancan a suffi pour mettre en travail l'imagination impressionnable du "Courrier de Bizerte."

Le Commandant du "Condor," qui évoluait au large, assez loin de Bizerte, a, lui aussi, aperçu ces vaisseaux, mais naviguant bien au delà des eaux Tunisiennes, si lointains qu'il n'a pu les reconnaître exactement, même à l'aide de ses lunettes marines, et que ce n'est que par hypothèse, d'après la forme des navires, qu'il conclut, lui aussi, au passage de l'escadre Anglaise.

Avec ces chaleurs, il faut se défier décidément des mirages grossissants.

No. 53.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 4.)

(No. 47. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, July 23, 1896.

WITH reference to the Memorandum of the Italian Ambassador, inclosed in your Lordship's despatch No. 5, Confidential, of the 17th instant, I have the honour to state that, save the public vapourings of persons, of whom the Archbishop of Carthage was perhaps the most conspicuous in position, while not the least so in violence, at the different resting places of M. de Morès' body on its journey to Paris and in Paris itself, I have heard nothing lately of any intention to send an expedition into the Desert immediately to avenge his death.

On the other hand I think it quite possible that the garrison at Gabes may have received instructions, as reported by the Italian Consular Agent, to hold themselves ready

to leave for the south, though I imagine that this expedition will probably be deferred to the cold season, and will only have, at all events as its primary object, the erection of a fort at El-Ouatia.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S.—With reference to the inclosure from Mr. Howard, sent me in your Lordship's despatch, I do not imagine that M. Millet's journey to Paris was, at all events primarily, connected with M. de Morès, as I had reason to suppose that the chief object of that journey was to discuss the questions of the Commercial Treaties.

With the object of ascertaining whether he had received any instructions from his Government as to M. de Morès' journey, I, one day, lent him "Truth," which contained an article from its Paris correspondent, asserting that he had, and took an opportunity of asking if that statement were true. He replied, "No," but added that he was in Paris at the time, and heard what was going on, or words to that effect.

W. H. D. H.

No. 54.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Mr. Haggard.

(No. 8.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, August 8, 1896.

I HAVE received your despatch No. 46, Confidential, of the 17th ultimo, reporting your conversation with M. Révoil with regard to an erroneous report which had appeared in the "Dépêche Tunisienne" on the movements of the British fleet before Bizerta.

I approve the action taken by you in this matter.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 55.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 25.)

(No. 49. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 6, 1896.

OF late there has been a renewal in the French press here, specially [in the "Dépêche," the generally received semi-official organ, of the agitation in favour of the project to which I had the honour of alluding in my despatch No. 65, Confidential, of the 12th August, last year, of making Bon Grara, in the south of the Regency, a second Bizerta.

It is asserted that, while the harbour itself is admirable, the dredging operations necessary to deepen the channel into it, sufficiently to enable ships of burden to pass, could be effected at little cost. However this may be, there can be no doubt but that, if the plan be feasible, Bon Grara offers great advantages over Gabes both as a commercial and as a military port, for while Bon Grara is completely land-locked, Gabes is an open roadstead, while it is nearer and more convenient to the scene of proposed French action on the Tripolitan frontier and towards the Soudan than is Gabes.

In my despatch No. 44 of the 14th ultimo, I had the honour of laying before your Lordship what I take to be the French intentions with reference to the measures to be adopted for diverting the course of the Soudan trade from Tripoli into Tunis, and of pointing out that the command and isolation of Ghadames—the present centre of that trade—would appear to be, at least the primary aim of their projects. I ventured, at the same time, to express the opinion that they are probably right in supposing that, if they erect forts in the neighbourhood, they will have it in their power to turn the stream of Ghadames' commerce into Tunisian territory. But then the question arises, and this is a consideration which they would seem to have lost sight of, as to whether the merchants engaged in that trade, who are all Tripolitans, would not afterwards ignore Ghadames altogether, and take some more southerly

route to Tripoli—through Wadai even, if necessary,—and be thus secure from French interference for, at least, a long time to come.

This reflection may possibly account, at least in part, for the apparent Turkish indifference to the French schemes, of which no secret is made. They may think that the French are embarking on an arduous enterprise, that they will find themselves in a hornet's nest of hitherto irreconcilable and unconquerable Towaregs, whom they will, therefore, for a long period, at all events, be neither able to conciliate nor to crush effectively, owing to geographical, climatic, and racial causes, and that, when they have attained their object, they may after all find that the command of Ghadamès has brought them no nearer any tangible result than they were before.

It would seem that, if the works at Bon Grara are really in contemplation, it is in connection with the Ghadamès scheme that they will be undertaken. Were it not, however, for the instance of Bizerta, where enormously expensive works were undertaken in anticipation of a problematical commerce, which it is now shown cannot come there for many years, perhaps never, one would suppose that it would be most unlikely that any similar outlay would be incurred at Bon Grara until the problem was solved as to the value of the trade which will, it is hoped, be diverted from Tripoli, and it might be supposed that now, with the example of Bizerta before them, such an outlay would be impossible, but that the murder of M. de Morès having stirred up a perhaps somewhat waning enthusiasm, it is difficult to gauge the possibilities of French financial folly in such a matter, particularly as, whatever the cost, none of it will fall upon themselves, as the native inhabitants of Tunis will have to pay the bill, and as, moreover, it is confidently asserted and hoped that with the fortress of Bizerta in the north of Tunis, and that of Bon Grara in the south, Malta would be in a bad way, a belief which, however, as I am told, is not fully shared by our naval and military authorities, although Bon Grara, at a few hours' distance, is uncomfortably close as a base for a torpedo-boat raid—the one form of attack from which Malta is supposed not to be quite secure.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 56.

Consul-General Jago to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received August 31.)

(No. 4. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tripoli, August 19, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to acknowledge the receipt of Sir Thomas Sanderson's despatch No. 2, dated the 28th ultimo, transmitting, for my information, a copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tunis, No. 44, of the 14th ultimo, respecting the murder of the Marquis de Morès, and the intentions of the French authorities in Tunis to construct forts at El Ouatia, and near Ghadamès, with the view to divert the Soudan trade from Tripoli to Gabès.

I venture to submit to your Lordship a Memorandum which I have drawn up on the subject.

It seems to me hardly credible that if the French are really actuated by commercial considerations only, they should be in ignorance of the facts stated by me in regard to the Tripoli-Soudan trade, and which are known here to every person at all interested in the subject.

I have, &c.

(Signed) THOS. S. JAGO.

Inclosure in No. 56.

Memorandum.

IT is impossible to understand in Tripoli the importance given by the French in Tunis to Ghadamès in connection with the Tripoli and Western Soudan trade. Ghadamès is not a junction or emporium of this or any other trade, and its disappearance to-morrow would exercise no influence in any direction.

It is true that the Ghadamseen merchants have, by superior commercial instincts and business habits, secured to themselves the practical monopoly of the trade in

question, but their centres of trade are not at Ghadamès, but at Tripoli and Kano. It is at Tripoli where they reside, where their capital exists, where they make up their outward Soudan caravans by the purchases of European manufactures suitable to the consumption and tastes of the Soudan, and where they sell or export to Europe the produce of their return caravans sent to them by their relations, partners, and associates established in Kano; the goods in both cases remaining undisturbed in transit until arrival at their respective destinations.

Besides these merchants having large establishments at Tripoli and Kano, are a large number of inferior traders, who live at Ghadamès when at home, but who buy and sell in Tripoli the merchandize which forms their outward and homeward caravans.

All Ghadamseen caravans, great and small, pass by Ghadamès on their way to and from Ghât, but for personal convenience only, not for trade purposes. They stay for a time to see their families for repose or for renewing their camels, the neighbourhood of the town being a large camel-breeding district. They return there in their old age and occupy themselves with the correspondence between Kano and Tripoli. In rare instances small depôts of a particular kind of goods coming from Tripoli are formed there, until advices from Kano render their expedition there advantageous.

No Tripoli caravans bound to Ghât, other than those of the Ghadamseen, ever pass by Ghadamès, they invariably proceed by Ufella, Sokna, and Shebha, leaving Murzuk to the left. Ghât, and not Ghadamès, is the junction or emporium of trade with Kano, and is the real point of departure for, and arrival from, the Soudan. Caravans meet here from all parts; goods are bought and sold; and numbers of Tripoli traders never proceed further.

Through caravans from Tripoli here make their usual contracts with the Touareg Chiefs for guides, escorts, hire of camels, and tolls for safe conduct through their respective territories on their road to Kano.

The number of commercial transactions made here during the season of the passing of the caravans is said to be very large.

The murder of the Marquis de Morès was held at Tripoli to have been the natural sequence of a most foolhardy enterprise, conducted under circumstances of astounding ignorance and lack of forethought and preparation.

The creation of a fort by the French at El Ouatia, the scene of the murder, would have no other result than to stir up the latent fanaticism of the Tripoli frontier population against the French. El Ouatia is said to be about 30 kilom. from Sinaoun, a Turkish oasis on the road from Naloot to Ghadamès, on the Tripoli-Algerian frontier, the limits of which have not been defined. All to the west of this road is the Sahara, the territory of the Touaregs, in which El Ouatia is situated.

This road, Naloot-Sinaoun-Ghadamès, is never used by the Ghadamseen caravans proceeding from Tripoli to Ghât, via Ghadamès. They go by Derj and Mizda, well to the east, in well-defined Tripoli territory. It is therefore difficult to see what influence on trade the erection of a fort would have. It would, however, undoubtedly afford a rich crop of frontier disputes and incidents.

Precisely the same observations would apply to Ghadamès as to El Ouatia in the event of the advancement of French forts to its neighbourhood in order to command it, and cut off its communications with the Soudan. But Ghadamès has no trade beyond what is necessary for the local wants of a small and poor population; and the passage by it of Ghadamseen caravans from Tripoli to Ghât is taken purely as a matter of private and personal convenience, as I have pointed out. These caravans, if disturbed by French vicinity to Ghadamès, would naturally avail themselves of the eastern route to reach Ghât, like all other Tripoli caravans, that is, by Sokna and Shebha, returning by the same route. The French theory, therefore, that blocking Ghadamès would divert the stream of communication from Tripoli to Gabès is not intelligible, Ghadamès not being a trade centre; but the same theory apparently presupposes the existence in the Soudan of a body of independent traders, who, finding their communications cut off with Tripoli, would naturally, it is supposed, seek the only other outlet possible, namely, Gabès. But such a body does not exist. Besides one or two discredited Tripoli traders at Kano, the whole of the import and export trade there is in the hands of Ghadamseen, the relatives, partners, and associates of the Tripoli Ghadamseen houses of commerce from whom their interests are inseparable. Tripoli caravans have not gone to Sokoto for some years. Kano is now the head-quarters in the Soudan of Tripoli trade.

Supposing that in process of time the French succeeded in cutting off the oasis of Ghât from the Soudan, its existence as a junction and emporium would cease, but would be transferred most probably to Murzuk, which would thus become of enormous com-

mercial importance, both for the Bornu and Soudan trades. Tripoli-Soudan caravans would gain Kano by Bilma, Air, or Agadès. This route is already followed at the present by a few caravans, and before Rabah's invasion of Bornu many came home through Bornu and the Fezzan to Tripoli. The choice of routes, more especially for the homeward-bound caravans, largely depends on the supply of camels and little else. Only last week, for instance, a Tripoli caravan from Dickwa, the new capital of Bornu, arrived by way of Kano, Zinder, Bilma, and Murzuk. A companion caravan, expected next week, is coming home through Air and Ghât, their separation having been caused by want of camels.

Indications are not wanting that the Bornu-Tripoli trade will soon be reopened, and by the old route of Murzuk and Bilma. Already Rabah is making efforts to open up trade with Benghazi and Tripoli through Kufra and Jalo.

There can be little doubt that, however much the French authorities of Tunis may try to influence the Tripoli-Soudan trade by advancing southwards their posts, and thus hampering it, this trade will survive a considerable time owing to the diversity of routes which are open to it. The French, however, appear to leave out of the question the considerations which make Tripoli, rather than Gabès, a centre of Soudan trade.

Tripoli is practically a free port, and Soudan and Bornu produce pay as customs duty from the country of origin to the wharves of European Custom-houses, a nominal export duty of 1 per cent., and nothing else. This produce passing through Algeria or Tunisia, would have to pay heavy export duties under present circumstances.

Again, Tripoli possesses stores of articles imported from Europe, especially designed for consumption in Wadai, Baghirmi, Bornu, and the Soudan, each of which countries requires a different variety; a knowledge of which has only been gained by long experience. The ports of Tunis and Algiers contain no such dépôts or local experience.

Even if the French at Algeria and Tunis reduced their export duty on Soudan produce to nil, it would hardly induce the Tripoli trader to transfer his business there, and to break with old customs and traditions, without compensating advantages, given for instance in the shape of heavy bounties.

The advantage of Gabès being 100 kilom. as the crow flies, nearer to Ghadamès than Tripoli, counts for nothing to traders who count their journeys by months and not by days, and to whom time is of no object.

Regarding the Touaregs, by Anglo-French Treaty of 1890, the sphere of influence of the French comprises the territories of this people, and so far as England and France are concerned, it is held that the French can if they choose, and are able to do so, subjugate them and occupy their country. But until this is done, it is said to be an impertinence to speak of them as French subjects; still more to invoke the assistance of the Turkish authorities for incidents connected with their usual tribal warfare, to chastize on behalf of a small section of them who may have found it convenient to migrate to Algerian or Tunisian territory, other and independent sections of the Touareg family, inhabiting or frequenting the Sahara in the neighbourhood of the Oases of Ghât and Ghadamès.

The Touaregs are held to be perfectly able to take care of themselves, they being masters of the situation by reason of the nature of their country, climate, and their great powers of endurance and by their holding all the trade routes.

The prosperity of Tripoli consists in keeping on good terms with the Touaregs not in mixing itself up with their private family quarrels or tribal differences. As the Tripoli trade depends on the Touaregs who hold all the trade routes to the Soudan, so the latter are largely dependent on the former for their means of livelihood.

The value of the Tripoli-Western Soudan trade, out and home, during the past twelve months is estimated approximately at 100,000l.

No. 57.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 50. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, August 28, 1896.

AFTER several assertions and denials with reference to an attack by desert nomads on Fort McMahon, a French military post in the direction of In-Salah and Tuat, to the south of the Algerian province of Oran, there has appeared in to-day's

issue of the semi-official "Dépêche," the inclosed account, which appears to be authoritative, of that occurrence, which would seem rather to argue against the certainty with which the immediate and easy occupation of the district of Tuat far away in the Sahara is foretold by another article from the "Dépêche" also inclosed, an occupation which was also discussed in the inclosure of a despatch from Mr. Howard, forwarded me in your Lordship's despatch No. 7 of the 7th instant.

It will be remembered that it was a band composed, like that which raided Fort McMahon, of Touaregs and revolted Chaumbas which murdered the Marquis de Morès hundreds of miles away to the south-east, so the hostile operations of these nomads would seem to threaten French schemes of territorial expansion in North Central Africa in more than one direction, and may well prove a formidable obstacle to the peaceful realization of those plans.

In conversation with the "Chef de Cabinet" of the Residency, he told me that they had no official confirmation of the projected movement for the occupation of Tuat, but he seemed to think that it was more than possible that the statements in the newspapers might prove to be correct.

I have, &c.

(Signed)

W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 57.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of August 22, 1896.

LE TOUAT.—C'est une affaire entendue: dans quelques mois le drapeau Français flottera sur les ksour les plus importants du Gourara et du Tidikelt—Timimoun et In-Salah. Le Gouvernement a décidé la prise de possession de cette région—généralement connue sous le nom de Touat—qui se fera avec des goums indigènes commandés par l'un des chefs les plus influents de la tribu maraboutique des Ouled-Sidi-ech-Cheik, Si Eddin, dont l'autorité est incontestée dans les oasis que nous voulons occuper.

Notre présence à In-Salah aura, pour notre influence, les plus heureuses conséquences. C'est qu'en effet ce district est le centre commercial et politique du Tidikelt; c'est le passage habituel et l'entrepôt le plus considérable des marchandises traversant le Sahara pour aller au nord, au sud-est, et au sud. Les caravanes de Ghadamès, de Ghât, du Fezzan y entreposent des marchandises à destination de Tombouctou, ou Tinbektou, du Soudan Occidental, des Touaregs de l'ouest et du sud, des nomades de l'ouest du Sahara.

Si l'on considère que nous avons comme partisans les marabouts et les autorités locales; que, d'autre part, certaines confédérations du Sahara Central cherchent à se rapprocher de nous, pour trouver un point d'appui qui leur échappe ailleurs, il est permis d'espérer qu'après notre installation à In-Salah, la traversée du grand désert et l'accès du Tchad n'offriront plus d'insurmontables difficultés.

Depuis plusieurs années déjà, Ag-Kerazy, l'Amrar (Chef) des Touaregs Taïtoq, qui habitent l'Adrar-Ahnet, demande à entrer en relations suivies avec nous. A différentes reprises, il a promis de nous faciliter l'accès du Sahara Central lorsque nous serions installés à In-Salah. Le moment ne tardera donc pas où nous serons fixés sur ce Chef Targui, dont le neveu, Kenan Ag Tissi, visita la France en 1889, en compagnie de M. Masqueray.

Bien que très peu d'Européens aient pu visiter le Touat, ce pays est aujourd'hui connu. Des spahis indigènes, déguisés en caravaniers, y sont allés maintes fois et en ont rapporté des renseignements très précis et très complets. MM. les Commandants Deporter et Bissuel, M. le Capitaine le Châtelier et M. Gerhard Rohlfs, l'ont décrit en détail dans leurs ouvrages.

Ces auteurs s'accordent à dire que les étrangers Arabes et Berbères donnent le nom de Touat à tous les groupes d'oasis limités au nord par le massif des dunes de l'Erg Occidental, au sud par l'Erg Echchach et le plateau de Moudir; à l'ouest, par le bord du massif des dunes d'Iguidi; à l'est, par le plateau de Tadmaït et ses ramifications septentrionales.

Mais, pour les indigènes, le nom du Touat est réservé aux oasis de la vallée de l'Oued Messaoud. Les groupes du nord constituent le Gourara et ceux de l'est forment le Tidikelt. L'ensemble de ces territoires, avec les oasis qui s'y rattachent naturellement au nord et à l'ouest: Kazas, Guerzim, &c., a une population sédentaire

et nomade de plus de 400,000 habitants. On évalue à 10,000,000 le nombre de palmiers-dattiers qui, pour la plupart, produisent beaucoup de dattes, dont quelques espèces soit de qualités supérieures et très estimées dans le commerce.

Les indigènes se divisent en Arabes, Berbères Zenata, Chorfa, Harratine, et nègres. Les premiers dérivent en grande partie de la célèbre tribu des Hilal, venus d'Orient.

Les seconds appartiennent à la race des Kabyles de l'Atlas. Les troisièmes sont des Arabes de noblesse religieuse, descendant ou prétendant descendre directement, par les mâles, du Prophète Mohamed par la lignée de Fathma Zohra, sa fille, mariée à Ali-ben-Abou Thaleb. Ces Chorfa, nombreux au Touat, y exercent aussi une grande influence. Les Harratine passent pour des mulâtres du pays, et les nègres sont originaires du Soudan; les uns et les autres sont esclaves ou serfs des grands Seigneurs Sahariens.

Les indigènes de toutes les oasis du Gourara et du Touat sont inégalement répartis en deux sofs ou partis opposés: les Soffian et les Ihamed.

L'industrie locale produit des tissus de laine très estimés. A Sba et à Kaberten, dans le Gourara, on procède à l'extraction du salpêtre et partout, surtout dans la forêt au sud d'In-Salah, le charbon et les bois font l'objet d'importantes exploitations.

Le commerce d'échange est assez important avec Ghadamès et Tripoli, avec l'Aïr et le Soudan Central; il est considérable avec Tombouctou et le Soudan Occidental; il est très actif avec le sud Marocain et les tribus Sahariennes de l'ouest et de l'est. Les Chaâmba, les Laghouat Ksel, les Trafi, les Hamian apportent des céréales, de l'huile, du beurre et des produits manufacturés provenant du Mzab. Comme toutes les caravanes allant vers le nord, ils emportent des dattes en grande quantité, de l'or en poudre et en lingots, de l'ivoire, des cuirs bruts, des pelleteries brutes, des ustensiles de bois, des cuirs façonnés, des dépouilles d'autruche, des ânes, et des nègres esclaves.

On trouve dans les entrepôts: café, thé, sucre, fer, acier, plomb, soufre, cuirs ouvrés, cotonnades blanches et teintées en bleu, tissus de laine bleue, chéchias, chaussures, drap de couleur, burnous en drap, outils en fer et en cuivre, ustensiles de ménage en fer battu, en cuivre, et en porcelaine, bijoux d'or et d'argent, corail, verroterie, parfums, médicaments, bougies, coutellerie venant du Maroc, aiguilles et fil, armes et poudre, fil de fer et de cuivre, &c.

Les habitants cultivent le palmier, le coton, le tabac, la garance, le chanvre, le henné. Dans les jardins des oasis, il y a des abricotiers, des pêchers, des cognassiers, et comme légumes, des choux, oignons, navets, pastèques, aubergines, melons, citrouilles, tomates, poivrons, fèves, carottes, &c. Les nomades élèvent des chameaux, chevaux, ânes, chèvres et moutons, parmi lesquels l'ademan, espèce de mouton sans cornes et sans laine.

Par ce qui précède, on voit que la contrée dans laquelle nous allons nous installer, et qui est le prolongement naturel du département d'Oran, ne manque pas de ressources; les troupes qui encadreront les gommiers y trouveront tous les vivres nécessaires.

Si l'influence de Si Eddin est réelle, nos soldats n'auront pas à se servir de leurs armes. Car si nous nous présentons devant les oasis Touatiennes en amis, des dispositions seront prises pour vaincre toute attaque imprévue: *Si vis pacem para bellum*. En ce faisant, on agit aussi sagement que prudemment. La réussite de l'entreprise nous paraît donc certaine.

Au point de vue Tunisien, nous ne pouvons que nous en réjouir. Nos négociants du sud trouveront de nouveaux débouchés sur les marchés du Touat. Il ne faut pas perdre de vue, en effet, qu'ils en seront plus proches que les Algériens ou les Oranais.

Inclosure 2 in No. 57.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of August 27, 1896.

L'AFFAIRE DU FORT MAC-MAHON.—On se rappelle qu'il y a un mois environ nous avons annoncé qu'un parti de Touareg et de Chaâmbas dissidents avait attaqué le Fort Mac-Mahon, et razié les méhara de l'escadron de spahis Sahariens qui y tient garnison.

Voici des détails précis sur ce coup de main audacieux:—

Vers le milieu du mois dernier, le 17 Juillet, un "rezzou" (expédition armée) de cinquante combattants environ, Touareg et Chaâmbas dissidents, obéissant à Bou-

Amama, s'est porté non pas sur le fort lui-même, mais près du Fort de Mac-Mahon, qui est notre avancée vers le Touat et In-Salah.

Le rezzou prit pour objectif le troupeau, qui est pour la population du poste une question de vie ou de mort dans ce désert absolu, et les méhara de l'escadron de spahis Sahariens. Troupeau et méhara étaient en pâturage à 4 kilom. du fort, protégés par une garde de onze hommes. Le rezzou s'est emparé de quatre-vingt-deux méhara de l'escadron, qui est maintenant démonté. Il a essayé d'emmener le troupeau, mais a dû l'abandonner, parce qu'il retardait sa fuite. Un chef de groupe des spahis a été tué, ainsi qu'un tirailleur Algérien, et deux autres tirailleurs ont été blessés.

L'escadron étant anéanti n'a pas pu poursuivre, et l'infanterie du fort (demi-compagnie) s'est trouvée naturellement impuissante.

Le Lieutenant du Bureau Arabe n'a pu que relever les traces du rezzou pendant quelques kilomètres, et se rendre compte de la direction prise par les pillards.

On est étonné de l'audace d'un tel coup de main, de son exécution bien réglée, et surtout de sa préparation, qui montre jusqu'à quel point ces gens là sont renseignés sur nos faits et gestes.

Le Capitaine Germain, commandant l'escadron des spahis Sahariens, avait quitté Mac-Mahon pour venir à Ghardhaïa recruter des hommes et acheter des méhara pour constituer un troisième peloton dont l'organisation venait d'être décidée. Il était, au moment du rezzou, à El-Hadadra, en route pour le retour, n'ayant laissé que son Sous-Lieutenant à Mac-Mahon.

De plus, par surcroît d'embarras, l'officier de renseignements du poste, très au courant des choses de son annexe, M. Falconnetti, venait de partir en congé, et d'être remplacé par un nouveau venu.

L'occasion était favorable. Ils n'ont eu garde de la manquer.

No. 58.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 51. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 3, 1896.

ALTHOUGH nothing definite is yet known here as to the progress of the negotiations for the renewal of the Treaty between Italy and Tunis which is on the eve of expiring, there is a general impression that they are taking a course favourable to French views, a feeling which is expressed in the French press in paeans of rejoicing, while the tone of the Italian "Unione" is correspondingly despairing.

It is possible that the correctness of this impression may be to a certain extent confirmed by the inclosed extract from a private letter which I yesterday received from the Italian Acting Agent and Consul-General.

Signor Carletti was very anxious to join his representations to mine to obtain from the Beylical Government the repudiation of the application to foreign Consulates of the stamp and registration tax, and thus to continue the joint action which resulted in the withdrawal of the clause in the original Decree giving a preference to France, and I fancy that he looks upon this present tacit refusal of his Government to continue that identity of action as almost an act of desertion to the enemy.

Without, however, supposing that it is a straw which at all indicates the direction of the wind as far as England is concerned, the fact that Italy should not care to continue her joint action with us in claiming a right at once so clear and so useful to her large interests here would seem, at all events, to indicate an extraordinary change in her attitude towards France, at least with reference to the burning question of Tunis; and if that open sore be plastered over, and the bickerings and recriminations to which it has constantly given rise during so many years cease, it would seem that a closer general rapprochement between Italy and France is to be expected.

The Austrian Acting Consul-General has also had no reply to his representations to his Government on the subject of continuing the common action with regard to the stamp and registration taxes.

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Is it possible that this, taken in conjunction with the recent arrangement with regard to Tunis between Austria-Hungary and France, may be also not entirely devoid of significance?

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 58.

Signor Carletti to Consul-General Haggard.

(Extrait.)

Tunis, le 2 Septembre, 1896.

JE n'ai reçu aucune réponse au sujet du timbre et enregistrement, pas même un mot de réception pour les rapports envoyés; par conséquent il me semble clair que mon Gouvernement désire ne pas soulever la question qui nous intéresse. Cela m'ennuie énormément de ne pas collaborer avec vous pour obtenir le but commun.

No. 59.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 52. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 5, 1896.

WITHOUT knowing to what extent the Austrian revenues may be improved by the 2nd clause of the Declarations exchanged between France and Austria forwarded to me in your Lordship's despatch No. 9, Confidential, of the 14th ultimo, under which France cannot claim until 1904 for French wines imported into Austria-Hungary the low duties conceded to Italy for Italian wines, it is impossible to say whether France or Austria will be the gainer pecuniarily by that arrangement, by the first clause of which the latter renounces her most-favoured-nation clause in Tunis as regards France.

But to cause this arrangement to prove an advantage to France it must be shown that very little difference will arise from the privilege given to Austria in importing French wines, as the whole duties levied on Austrian goods entering Tunis during the past year are officially returned as amounting to only 468,870 fr., or under 19,000l.

It would thus appear that any French pretension to point to this arrangement as a proof of Austrian sympathetic self-denial—an example which it would be only becoming in other Powers to follow—must be looked at with a critical eye to relative facts and figures rather than with the unguarded benevolent glance of sympathetic appreciation.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 60.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 53. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 5, 1896.

THE Italian Acting Agent and Consul-General was good enough to-day to hand me the inclosed paper.

He tells me it is a copy of an original document which was picked up at Gabès by an Italian, and taken to the Italian Consular Agency there. He had no doubt as to its authenticity. It must evidently have been the coverer of the various papers which it mentions, and had been accidentally dropped.

It would seem to show that, as late at least as last month, the French military authorities were contemplating the possibility of an advance of a column to the region

of Ghadamès, and perhaps the careful details of preparation which this paper registers may tend to argue that that moment may not be very far distant.

I imagine that the last figure "17" in the second column may possibly indicate the detailed descriptions of seventeen stages between Gabès and Ghadamès.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 60.

Copy of an Original Document picked up at Gabès.

DIVISION D'OCCUPATION DE TUNISIE.—COMMANDEMENT MILITAIRE DE GABÈS.

Service des Renseignements.

No. Objet

Le Chef de Bataillon Wachi, Commandant Militaire de Gabès par intérim, à M. le Général

Désignation des Pièces.	Nombre.	Observations.
1. Croquis au 1/50,000	1	
2. Notice sur la région de Ghadamès ..	1	
3. Composition d'une colonne	1	
4. Notice sur l'itinéraire vers Ghadamès ..	1	
5. Itinéraires	17	

Gabès, le Août, 1896.

No. 61.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 12.)

(No. 54. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 5, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose herewith the copy of the note which the Italian Acting Agent and Consul-General has this day addressed to the Minister for Foreign Affairs, calling on him to proceed against the editor of a local paper, the "Petite Tunisie," for an insult to the King of Italy contained in its issue of the 4th instant.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 61.

Signor Carletti to the Tunisian Minister for Foreign Affairs.

M. le Ministre,

Tunis, le 5 Septembre, 1896.

LA "Petite Tunisie" du 4 courant, dont j'ai l'honneur de vous transmettre, ci-inclus, un exemplaire, contient une offense envers mon auguste Souverain, qu'elle appelle, "ce sombre et sinistre soudard qui a nom Humbert."

Comme il n'y a pas de doute que ce délit tombe sans le coup de l'Article 36, § 4, chapitre IV, de la Loi du 25 Hidjé, 1301, sur la liberté de la presse, je vous prie de vouloir, en conformité de l'Article 4, § 5 de la même Loi, demander à M. le Procureur de la République à Tunis qu'il soit procédé d'office contre qui de droit.

Je suis sûr de pouvoir compter sur votre bienveillant concours et sur le zèle éclairé de M. le Procureur de la République, et je vous prie d'agréer, &c.

(Signé) Z. CARLETTI.

Inclosure 2 in No. 61.

Law respecting the Press.

ARTICLE 36. L'offense commise publiquement envers les Chefs d'État étrangers sera punie d'un emprisonnement de trois mois à un an et d'une amende de 160 à 5,000 piastres (100 fr. à 3,000 fr.) ou de l'une de ces deux peines seulement.

Article 14, § 5. Dans le cas d'offense ou outrage prévu par les Articles 36, &c., la poursuite aura lieu, soit à la requête de l'offensé ou de l'outragé, soit d'office sur sa demande adressée au Ministre des Affaires Étrangères de la République Française ou du Ministre Résident de France à Tunis.

No. 62.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 55. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 7, 1896.

IN my despatch No. 53 of the 5th instant I had the honour to inclose the copy of a paper referring to a project of an advance on the region of Ghadamès from Gabès, and I have now the honour to transmit a cutting from the "Dépêche" treating on the same subject, from which it would appear that the secret of the finding of that paper has not been very well kept.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 62.

Newspaper Extract.

"L'UNIONE" publie l'information suivante, que nous reproduisons sous réserves :—

"A Gabès, les Français parlent très ouvertement de l'occupation de Ghadamès par les troupes Françaises. Ils disent que l'expédition du Touat étant décidée, ils feront d'une pierre deux coups, et ils assurent que ce n'est plus qu'une question de jours.

"On ne parle que de cela dans les cafés et les restaurants; et il y a quelques jours, dans l'un de ces derniers, le Commandant du Bataillon d'Afrique en parlait avec le Contrôleur, discutant sur l'itinéraire à suivre.

"En outre, il y a quelques jours, on a vu la Minute d'une lettre du Commandant de la Place de Gabès, qui accompagnait le plan de l'itinéraire à suivre pour l'occupation de Ghadamès.

"Cette Minute tomba par hasard entre les mains d'un Italien, lequel, nous assure-t-on, la transmit, comme il devait le faire, à notre autorité Consulaire."

No. 63.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 56. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 11, 1896.

AS was perhaps to be expected the "Dépêche" publishes to-day an evidently inspired denial of the fact that any such paper as that of which I had the honour to inclose a copy in my immediately preceding despatch had been lost by the "Commandant de la Place" at Gabès, but the Italian Agent and Consul-General has absolutely no doubt of its authenticity. The paper was a lithographed form, and evidently an official document.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 63.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of September 11, 1896.

NOUS avons reproduit, en faisant les plus expresses réserves, une information tendancieuse de "l'Unione," relative à des propos tenus dans un café par le Commandant du Bataillon d'Afrique et le Contrôleur Civil.

La Consorella ajoutait qu'un sujet Italien s'était approprié la Minute d'une lettre accompagnant le plan d'un itinéraire à suivre pour l'occupation de Ghadamès, et que cette Minute avait été remise à l'autorité Consulaire Italienne.

Nous sommes en mesure, aujourd'hui, de démentir très catégoriquement le journal "l'Unione." En effet, notre correspondant de Gabès nous télégraphie :—

"La soi-disant conversation entre le Commandant du bataillon d'Afrique et le Contrôleur est fausse. Aucune Minute de lettre n'est disparue de chez le Commandant de la Place de Gabès."

No. 64.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 57. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 12, 1896.

THE return here of the Resident-General was not expected until late in October, and M. Révoil was to go on leave directly M. Millet came back. Now, however, M. Millet's return without his family is announced in the "Dépêche" for the 20th instant, and M. Révoil tells me that the Resident will come back towards the end of the month, and that he M. Révoil is staying.

As everything is going on quite quietly, and there is nothing in the normal state of affairs to call for M. Millet's presence, it would look as if there may be something in the wind.

The Italian Treaty will lapse on the 29th; possibly M. Millet's return may be connected with this, but as the negotiations for its renewal are not going on here, there may, perhaps, be some other, as yet unexplained, cause.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 65.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 58. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 12, 1896.

IN the Foreign Office despatch No. 1 of the 25th January, 1895, I was instructed to take care of Portuguese interests, so, on hearing from his relations that a young Portuguese Jew, named David Silvera, had been imprisoned by the order of M. Berge, the French President of the Ouzara—the native Court—which has no jurisdiction over him, I made representations on his behalf, which have resulted in his release from prison.

The circumstances connected with this incident are not uninteresting.

It appears from the "dossier" of his case, which I saw, that Silvera had committed no offence—for it was a civil action—save that of declining, on account of his Portuguese nationality, to recognize the jurisdiction of the Ouzara, which he had a perfect right to do. For this offence this respectable young man was put into the Ouzara prison—a horrible place I am told.

The President of the Court took no steps to inquire into the truth of his statement, though it appears that his family are generally known here as "the Portuguese," nor to inform me of his plea and of his detention, and, when I heard of it from his relations, used every effort to avoid releasing him, so that he was kept in prison for a week, three days of which were actually after I had furnished the Residency-General with a formal declaration accompanied by dates that his father was registered as a

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Portuguese many years ago in Her Majesty's Consulate-General (which at that time, 1879, as now, protected Portuguese interests here), and with a certificate to that effect issued to him at the time by my predecessor.

I regret to say that, in my first conversation with the Resident "Adjoint" on the subject, I could not perceive that he in any way recognized the impropriety and arbitrary nature of M. Berge's behaviour, but supported his action.

I have treated the matter unofficially throughout, and as I presume that your Lordship would not wish at this moment to raise a question with the Tunisian Government, as Silvera has been released, as he has put forward no claim for compensation, and as, in reply to a private letter to the Residency after his release, in which I went through the whole case, pointing out the impropriety of M. Berge's conduct, and asking that he should be censured for it, and that measures should be taken to prevent the recurrence of such an incident, I have received satisfactory assurances, I do not propose to pursue the matter further.

M. Berge's action was, doubtless, in the main, inspired by the jealousy of the French officials of any resident of Tunis being in any respect protected from their tyranny, and tends to show the sort of treatment which the many thousand British subjects here will have to expect if they are at any time handed over to their tender mercies by the withdrawal of the Consular protection which now, to a certain extent, at all events, preserves them from the partiality and spite of the French authorities. It at the same time affords an instance of the sort of methods which are already in use to induce foreigners to adopt French or Tunisian nationality.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 66.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 59. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 16, 1896.

THE Resident "Adjoint" told me on the 12th instant that he was not expecting the Resident-General back before the end of the month—his return being originally fixed for the latter part of October. This I had the honour of reporting in my despatch No. 57, Confidential, of that date.

In the afternoon of that day Mde. Révoil was calling at my house, and was so curiously reticent about the matter when it was alluded to that it was difficult not to think that she was under orders.

Yesterday, however, the "Dépêche" announced his return for to-day, and he has arrived this morning.

M. Millet's extraordinary restlessness might perhaps be sufficient without any other special cause to account for his return during the heat at least a month before he was expected, but I do not understand the mystery which has been made about the matter by M. Révoil.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 67.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received September 28.)

(No. 60. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 18, 1896.

IN my despatch No. 59 of the 16th instant, I had the honour of announcing the unexpected return of the Resident-General, and in my despatch No. 57 of the 12th instant, of informing your Lordship that the Resident "Adjoint" had told me that he should stay on here, together with M. Millet, for some time; while the semi-official "Dépêche" announces this morning, in the most conspicuous place in its column of news, that "M. Révoil, Résident-Général Adjoint, prendra probablement son congé annuel vers le 15 Octobre."

But M. Révoil called on me this afternoon to say good-bye, as he is leaving for Paris to-morrow; Mde. Révoil and his family following at the end of the month.

If there be any reason at all for these repeated contradictions and mysteries, save the desire to be "en evidence," it is doubtless (as well as the cause for M. Millet's return and M. Révoil's departure) known at Paris. Here their only effect has been to excite a great deal of conjecture and gossip, much of it as silly as is, apparently, the mystery which has given rise to it.

It has struck me as possible that the real explanation of M. Millet's return may be that M. Hanotiaux may want the immediate services of his old private Secretary in some other direction, and that he is, consequently, returning to Paris, M. Millet being sent back here to carry on the work. They came together to call on me to-day, and seemed on perfectly friendly terms.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 68.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Consul-General Haggard.

(No. 14.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, October 1, 1896.

I APPROVE the action taken by you in the case of David Silvera, as reported in your despatch No. 58, Confidential, Tunis, of the 12th ultimo.

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 69.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 12.)

(No. 61. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, September 19, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a cutting from to-day's "Dépêche," from which it would appear that the so-called aggressions of Tripolitan tribes on Tunisian territory are beginning unusually early this season.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 69.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of September 19, 1896.

LES Ourghermas sont en train de procéder à leurs labours. Il paraît même que certaines tribus Tripolitaines de la frontière ont tenté d'ensemencer sur des terres situées en dehors de leurs limites et que nos protégés ont dû repousser, par la force, ces tentatives d'empiètement.

No. 70.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received October 21.)

(No. 74.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 15, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to transmit two cuttings from the "Dépêche," reporting the conclusion of Arrangements between France and Russia and France and Switzerland respectively.

By these Arrangements, as reported therein, while the Treaties and Conventions existing between France and the other two countries are applicable to Tunis, the Regency will continue to enjoy the most-favoured-nation treatment in respect to every other country save France.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure 1 in No. 70.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 15, 1896.

M. HANOTAUX, poursuivant le règlement de la situation conventionnelle de la Tunisie avec diverses Puissances, vient de signer avec M. Lardy, Ministre de Suisse à Paris, un Arrangement qui étend à la Tunisie les Traités et Conventions existant entre la France et la Suisse.

En vertu de cet Arrangement, la Suisse jouira dans la Régence du traitement commercial de la nation la plus favorisée, la France exceptée.

Ce traitement lui est concédé dans les mêmes formes où a été établi le régime qui règle les relations commerciales de la Suisse et de la France depuis le mois d'août 1895.

Inclosure 2 in No. 70.

Extract from the "Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 16, 1896.

UN Arrangement destiné à régler les rapports commerciaux de la Tunisie avec la Russie a été conclu, à Saint-Petersbourg, entre le Comte de Vauvimeux, notre Chargé d'Affaires, et le Représentant du Ministère des Affaires Étrangères de Russie.

Aux termes d'une Déclaration signée par les Représentants des deux Gouvernements, toutes les Conventions actuellement existantes entre les deux pays seront dorénavant applicables à la Tunisie.

La Russie jouira en Tunisie, au point de vue douanier, du traitement de la nation la plus favorisée, à l'exception de la France, Puissance Protectrice.

No. 71.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 9.)

(No. 77.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 20, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inform your Lordship that Mr. Galea, British Vice-Consul at Susa, who is at present at Gabes, the principal French Settlement in the south of the Regency, reports that whereas lately the whole military administration of the frontier districts bordering on Tripoli was carried on by Tunisian irregular troops directed by the "Bureau Arabe," these are now being replaced by regular soldiers, and the number of outposts is being increased. Previous to these changes the positions in occupation were Mednine, Matmata, Zarzis, Tatahouine, Danirat, and possibly several wells. It has now been decided, however, to bring the number up to at least fourteen, one of which is Gasr Garden. Mr. Galea does not as yet know the names of the other places which are intended to be occupied, but presumes they will be in the neighbourhood of newly-dug wells.

The market village of Gasr Garden has not proved so successful as was hoped, owing probably to the migratory habits of the Arabs, and to their prejudice against having a market in that direction.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 72.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 9.)

(No. 78. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 25, 1896.

THE Resident-General has told me that it is hoped that the murderers of Dr. Leach and his family have been discovered in Tripoli. He added that as there was no Extradition Treaty between Tunis and Tripoli it was proposed, with the view of bringing the men to justice, to come to an arrangement with the Tripolitan authorities upon the theory that Tunis and Tripoli both still formed part of the Ottoman dominions. This assumption has, as your Lordship will remember, hitherto always been strenuously contested by the French from the moment of, if not before, the occupation, and this would appear to be a curious moment for them to choose for the tacit acquiescence thus conveyed in the claims of the Porte over Tunis, which have, I believe, never been relinquished either by act or deed.

M. Millet suggested to me that the murdered man's heirs ought to pay for the expenses connected with the tracing and trial of the murderers. I replied that, with the exception of a few hundred francs found on the body of the murdered lady, the surviving child had been left absolutely penniless. He then suggested that the religious Society to which Dr. Leach belonged ought to be called upon to pay. To these surprising proposals I replied that it seemed to me that the proper people to pay for bringing the murderers to justice were the Tunisian authorities, especially in view of the fact that they were responsible for the necessity of incurring the large expenses of which he complained by failing to arrest on the spot, or in the immediate neighbourhood, the man to whose complicity in the crime every suspicion pointed from the first moment.

Your Lordship may recollect that at the time the Residency acknowledged the incompetency of the police, and excused it on the ground of economical considerations.

M. Millet did not pursue the subject of the responsibility for the expenses any further.

Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli, in reply to an inquiry of mine on the matter, has kindly informed me as follows:—

"My private information obtained from the French Consulate is as follows: The two murderers of the Leach family are supposed to be living at Misiwaata (?), about 120 miles on the coast south of Tripoli. They are Tripolitan Ottoman subjects, and will be tried here by the Ottoman Tribunals according to arrangements between the Vali and the French authorities here. The Vali is touring, but will return here to-morrow. After his arrival the 'indicateurs' will come from Tunis to identify and cause the arrest of the men.

"Of course, the matter remains secret here until action is taken. I will let you know more in time."

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 73.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 9.)

(No. 80.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 25, 1896.

THE Resident-General mentioned to me, in the course of the conversation on the subject of the Leach murder, which I have reported in my despatch No. 78 of this day's date, that to fulfil the requirements of the Ottoman Law, under which they were proceeding, it was necessary that the prosecution should be nominally instigated by the representatives of the victim, and asked me whether I could find out some one related to Dr. Leach to whom to send for signature an authority to take proceedings. Colonel Rebillet, the Military Attaché to the Residency, who has been charged with the matter, also spoke to me in the same sense.

I accordingly put myself in communication with Mr. Michell, the gentleman in charge here of the Mission to which Dr. Leach belonged, and took him to the Resident to explain to him certain difficulties connected with the suggestion. This was,

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however, rendered unnecessary by M. Millet declaring that the procedure which he had himself suggested was not wanted.

Meeting Colonel Rebillet some days afterwards, he asked me what steps I had taken in the sense of his request. I told him what I had done and its result. He expressed his great surprise at M. Millet's action, explaining that nothing had happened to alter the necessity of the course which they both had asked me to take. He then suggested that, as there seemed likely to be some difficulty about procuring the consent of the relatives of Dr. and Mrs. Leach, Her Majesty's Consul-General might, as the natural guardian of the infant child within his Consular district, make the application. I asked him to let me have a note on the matter, but, though ten days have now elapsed since our conversation, I have heard nothing more about it.

I should be much obliged if your Lordship would be good enough to inform me whether, in the event of the request being repeated, there would be any impropriety or inexpediency in view of the peculiar course proposed by the Resident, which I have reported in my previous despatch on this subject, to my adopting Colonel Rebillet's suggestion, which was, by the way, also made to me by the Resident-General on the occasion of our first conversation, both he and his subordinate alluding to the authority as a mere matter of form.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 74.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 9.)

(No. 81. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, October 28, 1896.

IN my despatch No. 54 of the 5th ultimo, I had the honour to inclose a copy of a note from the Acting Italian Agent and Consul-General, calling on the Minister for Foreign Affairs to proceed against the "Petite Tunisie," a local newspaper, for an insult published against the King of Italy, and I have now the honour to transmit the report of the suit, consequently instituted against the editor and printer of that paper.

It would be remarked that the extreme penalty for such an offence being a year's imprisonment and 3,000 fr. fine, the President of the Court considered that the imposition of a fine of 50 fr. in the case of the editor, and of 25 fr. in that of the printer, was sufficient punishment for characterizing His Majesty as a "sombre et sinistre soudard," and that the "Procureur de la République," in prosecuting them, asserted that were he a private individual, he should not contest the arguments for the defence, but that in his public capacity he could not agree with them.

As this view may be taken to represent that of the Government, it is perhaps not surprising that no heavier penalty was inflicted.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 74.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 28, 1896.

DÈS l'ouverture de la séance la salle est comble. Confondus parmi le public ordinaire des audiences correctionnelles, plusieurs personnalités Tunisiennes et un grand nombre de journalistes et de correspondants.

L'affaire n'est appelée qu'à 4 heures. MM. Crouzet et Brigol prennent place au banc des prévenus. A la demande du Président, M. Fabry, ils déclinent leurs noms et qualités et déclarent s'en remettre entièrement à leur Avocat, M^e Pietra.

Le Procureur de la République, M. Spire, se lève alors et prononce quelques paroles:—

"Quelle que soit," dit-il, "la qualité du plaignant, je ne puis que demander l'application de la loi.

"Si les inculpés se contentent d'expliquer dans quelles circonstances et par quelle suite de faits ils ont été amenés à employer des expressions offensantes à l'adresse d'un

Chef d'État étranger, s'ils se contentent d'expliquer quelle a été leur intention et de discuter la valeur des mots échappés à une plume trop rapide, mots empruntés d'ailleurs à un autre journal, s'ils se renferment dans ces limites, je ne serai pas en désaccord avec la défense.

"Mais si les inculpés essaient de soutenir que les journalistes ont le droit d'offenser ou d'injurier un Souverain étranger, alors je me réserve de faire connaître au Tribunal dans quelle mesure et dans quel sens je demanderai l'application de la loi."

M^e Pietra commence son plaidoyer.

Il reprend, en quelque sorte, la thèse du Ministère Public.

"Le Roi Humbert," dit-il, "est discuté; et, comme homme public, il est discutable."

"Un journaliste, un Français, est autorisé à prendre une plume et à écrire ce qu'il a sur le cœur. C'est même un devoir pour lui, dans certaines circonstances et alors qu'il s'en prend à ces personnages, à ces Souverains, qui appartiennent à l'histoire.

"La question ne pouvait être mieux ni plus clairement posée par le Ministère Public. C'est ce droit d'apprécier un Chef d'État étranger, que revendiquent les inculpés.

"Le Roi d'Italie se plaint de la triple épithète que nous avons employée à son adresse dans notre numéro du 4 Septembre. Ces mots 'sombre,' 'sinistre,' et 'soudard' constituent la seule injure, la seule offense que l'on relève dans l'assignation qui nous a été envoyée. Mais je compléterai, moi-même, cette assignation en lisant au Tribunal la phrase qui suit immédiatement le passage incriminé."

L'avocat donne lecture de cette phrase, où l'auteur de l'article dit que le Roi d'Italie "n'a qu'une pensée: celle de nous arracher une ou deux provinces qui se sont librement données à nous." Il fait ressortir que le but de l'auteur n'était pas d'offenser le Roi Humbert, qu'il était tout autre, et que les mots incriminés, et seuls incriminés, ne sont que des accessoires, des épithètes un peu vives échappées à la plume.

"Dans combien de bouches d'orateurs, sous combien de plumes de journalistes ces mots ne se sont-ils pas trouvés?"

M. Pietra soutient que le seul fait de faire partie de la Triple Alliance est la preuve que l'Italie est l'ennemie de la France. Son Chef n'a pas le droit, ajoute-t-il, de dire à un Tribunal Français: "Voilà un Français qui, chez vous, m'a offensé par ses appréciations, moi l'ennemi de votre pays. Vous allez le condamner."

Le délit pour lequel M. Crouzet est poursuivi est un délit d'opinion. "Et s'il est un délit d'opinion qui puisse être caractérisé," s'écrie le défenseur, "c'est bien celui-là. Je l'appelle, moi, un délit de patriotisme.

"Convoquez donc tous les Français, et demandez leur si ce délit existe. Je vous défie de ne pas le trouver dans tous les cœurs.

"Je ne plaiderais pas contre le Ministère Public, s'il avait, lui, de sa propre autorité, poursuivi mes clients.

"Mais pour découvrir l'Article XXXVI du Décret sur la presse, il a fallu une plainte du Roi d'Italie. Or, le Roi d'Italie n'a pas osé incriminer tout l'article."

A ce moment, il se produit un léger incident. M. Fabry fait remarquer à M. Pietra qu'il fait le procès du Roi Humbert et qu'il va, lui-même, commettre le délit reproché à ses clients.

L'avocat reprend son plaidoyer:—

"Le Roi d'Italie," dit-il, "se prétend offensé. Que peut être et que peut valoir cette offense? . . . Si vous parcouriez l'histoire et que vous recherchiez les procès faits par les Chefs d'États à des particuliers, vous en trouveriez bien peu."

" . . . Il fait pour cela plus qu'une offense, ou il faut que cette offense ait un caractère odieux ou menaçant. Il faut qu'elle devienne un crime de lèse-majesté!"

M^e Pietra cite alors plusieurs phrases qui, à ses yeux, constituent une offense méritant des poursuites. Il rappelle le mot de Gambetta, presque une menace à l'égard de MacMahon: "Qu'il se démette ou se soumette!" Il cite le mot de Rochefort, dans une de ses premières "Lanterne": "La statue équestre de Napoléon III représenté en César, est l'œuvre de M. Barye. On sait que M. Barye est le plus célèbre de nos sculpteurs d'animaux."

"Le plaignant," dit l'avocat, "s'est rabaisé par sa plainte. Il est vrai qu'il est à Rome; et que c'est à Rome qu'on a parlé pour la première fois du crime de lèse-majesté.

"L'histoire nous apprend que Domitien et Commode avaient besoin de ce crime, qui emportait la confiscation des biens, pour remplir les caisses du Trésor vidées par leurs prodigalités insensées. Ce n'est pas le cas, pour le Roi Humbert; il ne s'est pas portée partie civile!"

M^e Pietra passe ensuite à la discussion des mots incriminés.

"Le mot 'sombre,' dit-il, "veut dire ombrageux, soupçonneux, défiant; et le mot 'sinistre,' est à peu près son synonyme.

"Quant au mot 'soudard,' c'est une expression que l'on trouve dans Froissart et dans les vieilles légendes. On ne peut dire qu'elle soit réellement offensante."

Il cite les vers d'André Chénier :—

Rappelons-nous les temps où des tyrans sinistres
D'un peuple assujéti foulaient aux pieds les droits !

"C'est une appréciation ; ce n'est pas une injure."

"Nous n'avons pas adressé au Roi des épithètes outrageantes pouvant porter atteinte à son honneur et à sa considération !

"Depuis Grévy," ajoute-t-il, "la presse étrangère a dit contre nous tout ce qu'il y avait à dire, et même ce qui n'était pas à dire."

L'orateur lit le passage suivant, d'un article signé Simon Levrai dans le supplément illustré du "Petit Journal." Il s'agit des caricatures faites à l'étranger au moment des fêtes Franco-Russes.

"Pour les journaux Allemands et Italiens, la France n'était qu'une catin effrontée qui vendait ses caresses. 'L'Ulk' de Berlin installait un Russe enturbanné dans un harem à l'enseigne de la République Française et, devant lui, venaient s'incliner humblement trois houris, personnifiant ironiquement la liberté, l'égalité, et la fraternité. . . .

"Ces jours derniers, on m'envoyait de Rome une caricature représentant la France, sous les traits d'une affreuse maritorne sur la tête de laquelle les deux Empereurs de Russie et d'Allemagne ouvraient, chacun de son côté, un robinet de douche. Au-dessous de l'image, cette légende : Douche No. 1 : Paroles affectueuses de Nicolas à Guillaume (?) ; Douche No. 2 : L'Impératrice de Russie ne viendra pas à Paris."

"Pauvre caricaturier ! infortuné bouffon ! triste avorton de Pasquin ! comme tu as bien volé leurs deux sous à tes cocitoyens, qui n'en ont pourtant guère de reste !"

L'avocat se demande pourquoi on n'a pas poursuivi M. de Cassagnac : "Tout le monde connaît la loi en matière de solidarité. C'est donc que M. Crouzet est plus solvable que M. de Cassagnac, puisqu'on lui réclame l'intégralité de la dette ?"

Il lit les passages de "L'Autorité" relatifs à l'affaire, et cite le vers de Corneille : "La clémence sied bien aux personnes Royales."

Il désapprouve deux suppositions émises par M. de Cassagnac touchant notre humilité en Tunisie devant l'Italie et touchant l'influence de cette dernière, dans la Régence : "Mais," ajoute-t-il, "ces erreurs d'appréciation pourraient se propager. . . ."

En passant, il touche un mot du Général Baratieri, que la presse Italienne a couvert d'injures et qui, pourtant, a été acquitté par le Conseil de Guerre : "Aucun organe n'a été poursuivi ; parce que le Général Baratieri appartenait à l'histoire, au public, et que ce dernier avait le droit de le juger, en patriote."

Il cite encore cette phrase de M. Millevoye, dans la "Patrie," phrase visant le Roi d'Italie : "Il nous hait et nous le méprisons."

M^r Pietra conclut que le délit est excusable. C'est un délit d'opinion ; et un délit d'opinion est un délit d'appréciation.

Il dit quelques mots de M. Brigol, qui accomplit en ce moment une période d'exercices de treize jours et qui a dû demander la permission d'assister à l'audience en civil, en respect pour l'ancien caporal de Palestro !

Il termine en demandant l'acquiescement de ses deux clients.

M. Spire, Procureur de la République, prend la parole :—

"Si je me lève," dit-il, "ce n'est pas pour contredire tout, absolument tout ce qu'a dit M^r Pietra avec un réel talent."

"Il a dit tant de choses ! Et de si bonnes parmi elles !

"Mais j'avoue que je suis un peu embarrassé devant ce champ si vaste parcouru par mon honorable contradicteur. Je ne sais, vraiment, si mes connaissances me permettront de le suivre si loin ; et en songeant que c'est aujourd'hui 27 Octobre, jour de la rentrée des Chambres, je me demande si, vraiment, il ne me faudrait pas le secours de M. le Ministre des Affaires Étrangères pour embrasser à la fois toutes les questions d'histoire, de diplomatie, de politique, abordées par la défense, pour dire ce qu'il convient de faire et de ne pas faire au sujet de la Triple Alliance, pour débattre l'avenir et la carte du Monde !

"Mais comme je n'ai pas le concours de tous ces personnages, que 'La Petite Tunisie' appelle un peu légèrement—elle me permettra de le lui dire—les Méline, les Barthou, et autres Hanotaux, je laisserai de côté tout ce qui touche à la France."

"... M^r Pietra avait, certes, un terrain facile. Quand on parle de drapeau, de patriotisme et du pays, on a bien des chances pour recueillir des applaudissements. Mais, si l'on peut dire que la Tunisie est la France, on ne saurait prétendre que la France est 'La Petite Tunisie.' Il y a une nuance."

Le Ministère Public continue quelques instants sur ce ton, effleurant de sa parole légèrement railleuse l'ensemble du plaidoyer si chaleureux de M^r Pietra.

"L'avenir ! Mais qui nous eût dit, en 1855, que nous aurions un jour la visite du Tsar !"

Puis, brusquement, M. Spire aborde la question, mais, il nous le dit lui-même, la question réduite à son expression la plus simple.

"Je me retranche derrière le texte de la loi. Personne n'est juge de ces questions-là !

"... Et cela est si vrai," continue le Procureur, "que, lors des premiers débats touchant la Loi sur la Presse, on avait écarté le délit d'offense envers le Président de la République, tout en le maintenant envers les Chefs d'États étrangers."

"... Comment, en effet, pourrait-on convier les Souverains étrangers à se faire représenter dans notre patrie, si leurs Représentants n'étaient assurés de trouver chez nous la justice à laquelle ils ont droit ? ... Les relations diplomatiques ne tarderaient pas à être interrompues."

"S'il peut être pénible," ajoute le Ministère Public, "à un certain point de vue de poursuivre des Français en semblable circonstance, c'est peut-être un bien au point de vue général."

"Les choses changent d'aspect selon qu'on les regarde par un bout ou par l'autre de la lorgnette."

"La première fois, Messieurs, que j'ai eu l'honneur de siéger au banc du Ministère Public devant votre Tribunal, c'était à une audience civile ; et il me souvient toujours de deux affaires qui passèrent devant vous et qui me laissèrent une profonde impression."

"Dans la première, il était question d'une revendication de propriété ; et je me rappelle qu'un acte antérieur à notre Protectorat fut produit, où il était dit que la prescription n'existait pas à l'encontre des puissants."

"L'affaire suivante fut appelée. C'était Son Altesse le Bey qui plaissait contre un tel."

"Quelles pensées ne me vinrent pas à l'esprit, en voyant cette transformation des choses, en comparant le temps où les puissants avaient à leur disposition de tels moyens dilatoires qu'on ne pouvait admettre la prescription en leur faveur, et celui où un Souverain s'adressait, comme le premier justiciable venu, à la justice de notre pays."

"Eh bien ! Cette plainte qui vous a été faite par le Roi d'Italie n'est-elle pas, elle aussi, la reconnaissance la plus éclatante de la suzeraineté de la France ?

"On a pour habitude de dire que là où flotte notre drapeau, règne notre patrie. Ce peut être une fiction. Qu'il me soit permis de dire que là où les Rois s'adressent à notre justice, règne la nation Française."

"... Et, en considérant cet acte du Roi d'Italie, je me demande si nous sommes bien éloignés du jour où la justice sera souveraine entre les peuples. Ce qui est utopie aujourd'hui sera réalité demain."

Le Procureur de la République ajoute que, comme simple particulier, il ne combattrait pas les arguments de la défense, mais qu'en sa qualité de Ministère Public il ne peut s'associer aux conclusions de M^r Pietra.

"Les expressions employées par M. Crouzet sont condamnables, au même point que toutes les expressions diffamatoires ou injurieuses."

"Je ne veux pas faire le procès de 'La Petite Tunisie,' mais je crois que les arguments qui ont le plus de valeur, le plus de poids, sont ceux qui peuvent se passer de ces sortes de langage."

"Je n'ai mis, Messieurs, aucune passion dans mon réquisitoire. Je demande l'application de la loi."

Après une courte réplique de M^r Pietra, le Tribunal se retire pour délibérer.

Au bout d'un quart d'heure, il rentre en séance. La teneur du Jugement est la suivante, au moins dans son sens général :

Attendu que "La Petite Tunisie" a publié, le Vendredi, 4 Septembre, 1896, un article intitulé "Le Traité Italo-Tunisien ;"

Attendu que M. Crouzet s'est reconnu le gérant du journal et l'auteur de l'article, et M. Brigol, l'imprimeur ;

Attendu que cet article contient une phrase où le Roi d'Italie est qualifié de sinistre et sombre soudard ;

Attendu que ces expressions constituent certainement une offense pour la personne à qui elles sont adressées ;

Attendu qu'une plainte a été régulièrement déposée par le Représentant du Gouvernement Italien à Tunis ;

Attendu que l'Article 36 du Décret relatif à la Loi sur la Presse en Tunisie punit

toute personne ayant adressé une offense à un Chef d'État étranger d'une peine de trois mois à un an de prison et d'une amende de 100 fr. à 3,000 fr. ou de l'une de ces deux peines seulement ;

Mais, attendu que le passage incriminé n'est qu'un accessoire dans un long article ;

Attendu, au surplus, que cet article a été publié à une époque de violentes polémiques engagées entre les journaux Français et Italiens ;

Par ces motifs, faisant application de l'Article 463 du Code Pénal sur les circonstances atténuantes,

Le Tribunal condamne M. Crouzet à 50 fr. d'amende et M. Brigol à 25 fr.

No. 75.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 18.)

(No. 82.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 14, 1896.

WITH reference to my despatch No. 80 of the 25th ultimo, I have the honour to inclose copy of a despatch from the British Vice-Consul at Sfax, and of an extract of a private letter from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tripoli, stating that it is reported that the supposed murderer of the Leach family, who had taken refuge in Tripolitan territory, had died.

I have heard nothing more from the Residency about their request that I should appear as the nominal prosecutor, of which I had the honour of informing your Lordship in my above-mentioned despatch.

I have, &c.

(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

P.S.—Just after I had concluded this despatch I received the note of which I have the honour to inclose a copy.

As the mail is just closing, I communicated immediately with the Residency as to the reported death of the supposed murderer. Unfortunately, the Chef de Cabinet was not in, but his subordinate stated that, as far as he knew, they had only as yet received the rumour of the death.

In any case, I shall take no steps in the sense of M. Millet's request until I have had a reply from your Lordship to the inquiry as to the proper course for me to follow which I had the honour to address to your Lordship in my despatch No. 80 of the 25th ultimo.

W. H. D. H.

Inclosure 1 in No. 75.

Vice-Consul Leonardi to Consul-General Haggard.

Sir,

Sfax, November 10, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inform you that the two men sent to Tripoli in search of Moktar, presumably an assassin of Dr. Leach, have returned, reporting that Moktar died in the month of June at a place one day's march from Tripoli. A formal inquiry was made by the Turkish authority of Tripoli, and the act certifying the result of the inquiry and the certificate of death have been sent by the Tripoli French Consul to the French Residency at Tunis.

This result has greatly disappointed and put out the judicial authorities, who have always been anxious to carry out any line of research indicated by me.

In prison at Susa there are two under arrest suspected of connection with the murderer, one of whom is much compromised by the contradictions between his depositions when arrested at Zavis and those afterwards made by him before the Judge at Sfax.

I have, &c.

(Signed) J. LEONARDI.

Inclosure 2 in No. 75.

Consul-General Jago to Consul-General Haggard.

My dear Mr. Haggard,

Tripoli, November 7, 1896.

WITH reference to the attempted arrest of the gardener, the reputed murderer of the Leach family, I regret to have to tell you that, on the arrival of the French and Turkish Agents at Mesurata, it was found that he had died a few weeks ago at Sleiten. My French colleague is collecting all the evidence he can obtain respecting the alleged death of the man from the Turkish and other quarters, as well as the depositions of the "indicateurs" sent here from Tunis to identify the accused to the Resident at Tunis.

I was under the impression that two men were sought for, but my French colleague tells me that only one, and that the gardener, was wanted.

Both the Governor-General here and the French Consul-General seem to have done all that could be done, and the matter was kept a profound secret. My French colleague had even paid to a local lawyer here the sum of 200 fr. to follow up the case before the Tribunals here. I had myself also retained a person to watch the case.

Believe me, &c.

(Signed) THOS. S. JAGO.

Inclosure 3 in No. 75.

M. Millet to Consul-General Haggard.

*Résidence Générale de la République Française,
Tunis, le 13 Novembre, 1896.*

M. le Consul-Général,

NOUS avons des raisons de croire que les meurtriers de la famille Leach se sont réfugiés en Tripolitaine. Notre Consul-Général à Tripoli a obtenu du Vali de les faire poursuivre devant les Tribunaux du pays et M. Trenga, avocat dans cette ville, a été chargé de suivre cette affaire devant la justice Ottomane.

Il est nécessaire, à cet effet, qu'il soit en possession d'une procuration des ayants droit de la famille Leach, et les règles de la procédure usitées dans le pays exigent que cette pièce soit rédigée en langue Arabe.

Je vous prie de vouloir bien examiner si, comme tuteur naturel du fils mineur du Pasteur Leach, il ne vous serait pas possible de donner cette procuration à M. Trenga. Elle pourrait être conçue dans la forme ordinaire des procurations que délivre votre Consulat-Général puis traduite en Arabe par un interprète assermenté.

Agréez, &c.

(Signé) RENÉ MILLET.

No. 76.

The Marquess of Salisbury to Consul-General Haggard.

(No. 16. Confidential.)

Sir,

Foreign Office, November 20, 1896.

I HAVE had under my consideration your despatches Nos 78 and 80, Confidential, of the 25th ultimo, in regard to the murder of Dr. Leach and his family, and the course which the French Resident at Tunis proposes to take with a view of bringing to justice the persons suspected of the crime.

It is, in the opinion of Her Majesty's Government, undoubtedly the duty of the Local Government to bring the murderers to trial, and to pay the expenses which it may be necessary to incur in so doing. The crime in question is not a mere private wrong, it is a violation of public order and tranquillity which, in the interests of the peace and safety of the community at large, it is the duty of the State to punish.

With regard to the suggestion of the French authorities that, before they take proceedings in the matter, they should receive a formal application from Her Majesty's Consul-General "as the natural guardian of the infant child within his Consular district," authorizing them to do so, I have to observe that, although under the very peculiar and tragical circumstances of the present case Her Majesty's Consul-

General would undoubtedly consider himself to be the proper person to protect the interests of the orphan until its natural guardians can be communicated with and their wishes ascertained, "the natural guardian of the child," so far as English law is concerned, will be its nearest relative, failing whom, the duty will devolve upon some person appointed by the Court, or on the Court itself.

It is naturally, however, a matter of solicitude to Her Majesty's Government that when two British subjects have been brutally murdered in a foreign country their murderers should be brought to justice; and you are therefore at liberty to sign the requisite request to that effect as Her Majesty's Representative, though you will be careful to point out to the French Resident-General that you are precluded from doing so as "the natural guardian of the child."

I am, &c.
(Signed) SALISBURY.

No. 77.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received November 23.)

(No. 83. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, November 14, 1896.

IN your Lordship's despatch No. 8 of the 8th August you did me the honour of approving the representations which I made to the Tunisian Government on the subject of the report which had been published and repeated by the semi-official "Dépêche" as to the British fleet having been engaged in the manœuvre of practising the blockade of the port of Bizerte.

In the course of those representations I pointed out that the authority of the semi-official character attributed to that paper would cause in France the belief of the tale, ridiculous in itself, an assertion which was immediately justified by the appearance in the French press of numerous articles violently attacking England for her supposed action.

This is now still further confirmed by the inclosed cutting from the same semi-official paper, which after some months' silence returns to the charge, notwithstanding the fact that it has already twice had to deny the accuracy of the statement.

This piece of information is considered so valuable that the "Dépêche," with the full knowledge of its untruth, puts it in the largest type in the most prominent position in the paper. It is true that it is inserted as a quotation, but no attention is called to the fact that the statement is untrue—a somewhat strange omission.

Your Lordship will probably be of opinion that, save perhaps incidentally, there is no good object to be gained by a renewal of my representations on the subject, and I only report the circumstance in order to show the animus against England which will stick at nothing to give itself expression, and will, in order to do so, even cause a semi-official paper to stultify itself over and over again. M. Estancelin's assertions as to the consequences of our supposed action would also appear to tend to show that such statements may possibly be not wholly without political object.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 77.

Extract from "La Dépêche Tunisienne" of October 25, 1896.

M. ESTANCELIN, ex-Député, publie dans le "Gaulois" un article dont voici les passages les plus intéressants:—

"On se souvient que, peu de jours après le départ de l'Amiral Gervais, la flotte Anglaise vint faire, en face de l'entrée du port de Bizerte, une manœuvre de guerre ayant pour objet le blocus simulé de ce port par une flotte ennemie.

"Cette impertinence Britannique pouvait se traduire ainsi: Vous pouvez envoyer votre flotte à Bizerte, mais, si elle peut entrer, nous sommes là pour l'empêcher de sortir.

"Si le Gouvernement Français n'a rien dit du procédé, il n'en a pas moins compris l'importance. Il en a été de même à Saint-Petersbourg, et je sais de la meilleure source que cette démonstration Anglaise a eu le résultat de donner plus de suite aux pourparlers

déjà engagés entre Paris et Saint-Petersbourg en vue d'établir un port d'hivernage pour la flotte Russe dans la Méditerranée: Bizerte aurait été choisi.

"Bizerte réunit admirablement toutes les conditions désirables.

"Sur les terrains disposés pour recevoir les constructions des nouveaux quartiers, il est facile d'élever des magasins et d'établir des dépôts de charbon pour la flotte entière; puis, en pénétrant dans la rade intérieure, soit, au sud, près de Menzel-Djemel, soit, au nord, le long de la route de Mateur, on peut choisir, à volonté, des emplacements pour les cales de radoub ainsi que pour tous autres établissements tels que forges, chantiers, &c.

"J'ai lieu de croire que les environs de Menzel-Djemel ou de Menzel-Abderrahman seraient préférés au côté nord et à la route de Mateur.

"La question, du reste, est encore à l'étude, mais il est certain que la présence de la flotte Russe à Bizerte complètera, d'une manière éclatante, la démonstration navale Franco-Russe, qui serait une réponse indirecte à la promenade de l'escadre Anglaise devant notre nouveau domaine maritime, et que le jour où, à côté du pavillon Français, y flottera le pavillon Russe, cette union matérielle, pacifique aujourd'hui, aura, dans la Méditerranée et dans tout l'Orient, des effets dont chacun doit comprendre l'influence considérable."

No. 78.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 21.)

(No. 90. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, December 3, 1896.

I HAVE the honour to inclose a Table taken from the "Journal Officiel" which, as the heading of the Statement explains, professes to be a Statement of the trade between Tunis and Tripoli during the year ended September 1896.

The British Vice-Consul at Susa assures me that this Statement is purely imaginary. He is, perhaps, the largest merchant in the south of the Regency, and, apart from the powers of observation which his widely extended business relations give him, it would hardly have been possible for such a trade to exist without part of it passing through his hands. He, moreover, resides a good deal, and has a large business, at Gabes, which is supposed to be the centre of this imaginary trade, and he says that it is quite impossible that it could pass unobserved by him.

The frontier trade, which Mr. Galea says does exist very largely, is the import into Algiers of French sugar, smuggled over the frontier with the connivance of the Tunisian authorities. It is sold to the country Algerians, and thus evades the enormous octroi dues with which, as he tells me, the Algerian authorities try to make up for the failure of revenue consequent on free entry into Algeria from France.

Mr. Galea says that, although he was himself engaged in this trade till lately to the extent of 100,000 fr. yearly, he gave it up, as he found that he had at least ten competitors, and he estimates the total trade at about 1,000,000 fr. yearly. He sold, he said, to Chaamba (Algerian) caravans, which marched back into Algeria with the sugar, so neither he nor his competitors had anything to do with the smuggling.

It will be noticed that no mention of this trade is made in those Tables, in which, indeed, sugar figures for only a small amount.

Even with the explanation given at the head that the object of their publication is to show that, in consequence of the peace and security assured by the authority and good government of the frontier, the ancient trade route with the Soudan is being restored, it is difficult to see the object that is to be gained by the official and authoritative publication of what Mr. Galea declares to be a pure fabrication, as complete as it is elaborate, save that of throwing dust in the eyes of possible hostile French critics of the administration of Tunis.

As a matter of fact, the region supposed to be traversed by these caravans is at this moment in so disturbed a condition that it would appear that the military authorities here, at all events for the present, shrink from the difficulties and dangers which even the erection of the fort which they had every intention of building on the spot where the Marquis de Morès was killed might entail, and, notwithstanding all their threats and vapourings, they seem to dread doing anything which might provoke the Touaregs to further acts of violence, and, judging that prudence is the better part of valour, to wish to conciliate his murderers rather than to avenge his murder.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

Inclosure in No. 78.

Extract from the "Journal Officiel" of Tunis.

RELEVÉ DU MOUVEMENT DES CARAVANES DANS LE SUD DE LA RÉGENCE.

Importation et Exportation.

LE mouvement commercial des caravanes dans le sud de la Régence ne date que de quelques années seulement.

Avant notre arrivée en Tunisie et même après l'établissement du Protectorat jusqu'en 1890, la frontière sud de la Tunisie, du côté de la Tripolitaine et du côté du Sahara, présentait une insécurité complète par suite de l'état de guerre régnant entre nos tribus Tunisiennes les Ouerghamma d'une part, et, d'autre part, les tribus Tripolitaines et les tribus Sahariennes.

Le commerce entre la Tunisie et la Tripolitaine se faisait exclusivement par mer. Le commerce avec le Sahara et les marchés de Rhat et de Radamès était nul ou plutôt empruntait la voie détournée de Tripoli. Il n'en est plus de même aujourd'hui, la paix ayant été rétablie dans ces dernières années dans la région frontière et l'autorité du Gouvernement du Protectorat s'y faisant énergiquement sentir.

En 1892 les premières caravanes franchirent la frontière de deux parts, timidement, avec quelques chameaux et quelques centaines de francs de marchandises.

Aujourd'hui, ce commerce augmente très rapidement, ainsi que l'indiquent les Tableaux ci-après, pour qu'il y ait intérêt à appeler sur son développement l'attention publique.

RELEVÉ du Mouvement des Caravanes dans le Sud de la Régence pendant le mois de Septembre 1895.

IMPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Mois de Septembre 1895.	
		Quantités.	Valeurs.
Juments	Tête	1	Fr. c. 310 00
Chameaux	"	49	3,762 00
Huile	Litre	5,340	3,287 50
Dattes	Hectol.	174	87 00
Fèves	Kilog.	200	35 00
Pistaches	Franc	..	8 00
Poissons	Kilog.	47	105 00
Natron	Quintal	18	432 00
Pois de chèvres	Kilog.	11	28 00
Houles	Pièce	50	1,269 00
Pantoufles	Paire	31	220 00
Peaux filali	Pièce	42	84 00
Moulines à main	"	11	77 00
Paniers à couscous	"	18	35 00
Marchandises diverses	Franc	..	330 00
Total			10,009 50

Nombre de caravanes	50
" d'hommes	243
" d'animaux	464

EXPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Mois de Septembre 1895.	
		Quantités.	Valeurs.
Blé	Kilog.	3,060	Fr. c. 476 70
Orge	"	55,148	7,295 70
Savon	"	300	234 00
Cotonnades	"	143	677 40
Chechias (bonnets rouges)	Franc	..	25 00
Étoffes	"	..	30 00
Houles	Pièce	48	..
Haïks	"	33	..
Étoffes, savon, miroirs, orge	Franc	..	..
Marchandises diverses	"	..	552 40
Total			9,291 20

Nombre de caravanes	49
" d'hommes	240
" d'animaux	450

RELEVÉ du Mouvement des Caravanes dans le Sud de la Régence pendant le 4^e Trimestre de 1895.

IMPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Oct.	Nov.	Déc.	Total.	Oct.	Nov.	Déc.	Total.
Chameaux	Tête	52	7	..	59	Fr. c. 5,836 00	720 65	..	6,556 65
Anesses	"	1	..	..	1	24 00	..	..	24 00
Chèvres	"	..	50	..	50	..	369 50	..	369 50
Huile	Litre	5,041	2,040	..	7,081	3,320 00	1,036 32	..	4,356 32
Houles	Pièce	9	..	..	9	158 00	..	..	158 00
Chaussures	Paire	72	21	10	103	186 00	93 60	56 00	335 60
Paniers à couscous	Pièce	99	..	..	99	178 00	..	..	178 00
Moulines à main	"	4	..	..	4	20 00	..	..	20 00
Cornes d'antilopes ou de gazelles	Paire	24	..	..	24	40 00	..	..	40 00
Couscous	Pièce	4	..	..	4	35 00	..	..	35 00
Fèves	Hectol.	2	..	..	2	35 00	..	..	35 00
Musc	Gramme	80	..	..	80	61 00	..	..	61 00
Peaux filali	Pièce	71	18	10	99	158 00	41 00	25 00	224 00
Beurre	Kilog.	200	..	150	350	220 00	..	300 00	520 00
Couvercles en sparterie	Pièce	..	7	..	7	..	15 64	..	15 64
Armes	Pistolets .. .. .	..	58	10	68	..	1,275 88	50 00	1,325 88
Couvertures	Poignards .. .. .	..	3	..	3	..	21 00	..	21 00
Natron	Quintal	..	22	..	22	..	..	1,268 00	1,268 00
Thé	Kilog.	..	150	..	150	..	..	585 00	585 00
Marchandises diverses .. .. .	"	..	..	..	..	258 00	389 80	389 80	1,037 60
Huit charges de beurre fondu, tapis, plats en cuivre et en bois, thé, soufre .. .. .	"	..	..	..	..	..	..	4,920 00	4,920 00
Objets Touaregs .. .. .	"	..	..	..	..	..	..	200 00	200 00
Total du 4 ^e trimestre						10,529 00	3,963 39	7,793 80	22,286 19
Numéraire pour mémoire						5,518 00	4,081 00	2,708 00	12,307 00

Nombre de caravanes	Oct.	Nov.	Déc.	Total.
" d'hommes	62	36	12	110
" d'animaux	293	214	88	595
	711	487	175	1,373

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EXPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Oct.	Nov.	Déc.	Total.	Oct.	Nov.	Déc.	Total.
Blé	Kilog.	16,900	7,065	1,290	25,255	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.
Orge	"	60,482	44,695	4,826	110,003	2,990 50	1,307 13	239 85	4,537 48
Bourre	"	20	"	"	20	7,930 20	5,928 00	666 07	14,524 27
Savon	"	56	"	"	56	28 00	"	"	28 00
Cotonnades ..	"	61	"	"	61	45 00	"	"	45 00
Houles	Pièce	40	"	26	66	200 00	3 00	"	48 00
Chéchias	"	"	"	671	671	"	"	140 80	340 80
Marchandises diverses	"	"	"	9	9	"	"	8,180 00	8,180 00
Étoffes, savon, miroirs, orge, &c.	"	"	"	"	"	493 75	315 00	1,702 00	2,510 75
Orge, huile, et tissus divers	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Étoffes, houles, graisse de mouton, cotonnade, &c.	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Total du 4 ^e trimestre ..		11,687 45				7,553 13	10,973 72	30,214 30	
Numéraire pour mémoire ..		4,360 00				491 00	977 00	5,828 00	

Nombre de caravanes ..	Oct.	Nov.	Déc.	Total.
" d'hommes ..	61	36	15	112
" d'animaux ..	283	204	64	551
	678	431	202	1,311

RELEVÉ du Mouvement des Caravanes dans le Sud de la Régence pendant le 1^{er} Trimestre de 1896.

IMPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Janvier.	Février.	Mars.	Total.	Janvier.	Février.	Mars.	Total.
Chameaux	Tête	4	14	3	21	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.
Huile	Litre	456	5,473	3,795	9,725	400 00	1,390 00	430 00	2,220 00
Natron	Quint. métr.	22	79 68	3 25	104 93	352 30	3,777 50	3,796 00	7,925 80
Beurre	Kilog.	750	"	"	750	1,268 00	3,435 40	416 25	5,119 65
Plumes d'autruche	"	"	"	"	"	1,500 00	"	"	1,500 00
Dattes	Hectol.	11	2	"	13	99 00	18 00	"	200 00
Carottes	"	"	"	"	"	9 00	"	"	117 00
Peaux de filali	Pièce	295	253	204	752	672 00	717 50	612 00	2,001 50
Coussins	"	3	"	"	3	30 00	"	45 00	45 00
Tapis	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	83 00	83 00
Or	"	"	"	"	"	486 80	242 00	5,153 00	5,881 80
Autres marchandises (armes, moulins à bras, citrons, laine, pantoufles, flèches, javelots, carquois, poignards, couvercles de plats à couscous, sandales, souliers, cuvettes)	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	"
Total du 1 ^{er} trimestre ..		4,817 10				9,580 40	10,735 25	25,132 75	
Numéraire pour mémoire ..		3,860 00				4,300 00	1,015 00	9,175 00	

Nombre de caravanes ..	Jan.	Fév.	Mars.	Total.
" d'hommes ..	36	23	93	
" d'animaux ..	203	220	105	528
	428	423	156	1,007

EXPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Janvier.	Février.	Mars.	Total.	Janvier.	Février.	Mars.	Total.
Blé	Kilog.	8,170	10,150	3,200	21,520	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.
Orge	"	43,010	33,600	14,450	91,060	1,475 12	1,751 75	609 00	3,835 87
Chèvres	Hectol.	9	"	"	9	5,898 88	4,398 00	1,776 50	12,073 38
Mulets	Tête	"	"	20	20	81 00	"	"	81 00
Houles	"	"	2	"	2	"	310 00	"	310 00
Chéchias	Pièce	"	10	"	10	"	50 00	"	50 00
Huile	"	"	13	"	13	"	45 00	"	45 00
Sucre	Litre	"	20	"	20	"	15 00	"	15 00
Cotonnades ..	Kilog.	"	75	"	75	"	45 00	"	45 00
Sucre et savon	"	"	"	"	"	25 00	291 00	59 50	375 50
Huile, savon, cotonnades	"	"	"	"	"	"	15 00	25 00	40 00
Savon, étoffes	"	"	"	"	"	100 00	50 00	"	150 00
Marchandises diverses	"	"	"	"	"	50 00	"	"	50 00
Total du 1 ^{er} trimestre ..		7,780 00				3,672 75	4,372 00	20,824 75	
Numéraire pour mémoire ..		1,500 00				2,200 00	"	3,700 00	

Nombre de caravanes ..	Jan.	Fév.	Mars.	Total.
" d'hommes ..	35	25	22	82
" d'animaux ..	198	173	93	464
	417	355	146	918

RELEVÉ du Mouvement des Caravanes dans le Sud de la Régence pendant le 2^e Trimestre de 1896.

IMPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Avril.	Mai.	Juin.	Total.	Avril.	Mai.	Juin.	Total.
Natron	Kilog.	5,890	775	2,728	9,393	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.
Huile	Litre	1,380	"	"	1,380	2,906 00	418 50	1,437 00	4,761 50
Chameaux	Pièce	14	"	"	14	1,104 00	"	"	1,104 00
Goudron	Kilog.	250	"	"	250	1,144 00	"	"	1,144 00
Peaux filali ..	Pièce	130	250	190	570	250 00	250 00	250 00	750 00
Coussins cuir ..	"	42	32	32	106	325 00	625 00	475 00	1,425 00
Couvercles plats	"	50	50	65	165	210 00	160 00	96 00	466 00
Ivoire	"	"	"	"	"	100 00	100 00	120 00	320 00
Plumes d'autruche	"	"	"	"	"	120 00	"	"	120 00
Pantoufles brodées	"	4	"	"	4	430 00	"	"	430 00
Moulins à bras	"	7	"	"	7	16 00	"	7 00	23 00
Boîtes en cuir ..	"	"	"	"	"	15 00	"	"	15 00
Marchandises diverses	Kilog.	120	"	"	120	"	45 00	"	120 00
Poignards Touaregs	Pièce	15	"	"	15	508 00	340 00	30 00	878 00
Défenses d'éléphants	"	"	4	"	4	"	90 00	36 00	146 00
Pommade odorante	"	"	"	6	6	"	240 00	18 00	258 00
Peaux de gazelle	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	120 00	120 00
" d'antilope ..	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	18 00	18 00
Fèves du Soudan	"	"	"	5	5	"	"	25 00	25 00
Coquillages du Soudan	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	18 00	18 00
Essences	"	"	"	"	"	"	"	45 00	45 00
Total du 2 ^e trimestre ..		7,128 00				2,018 50	2,697 00	11,843 50	

Nombre de caravanes ..	Avril.	Mai.	Juin.	Total.
" d'hommes ..	11	3	6	20
" d'animaux ..	57	8	15	80
	75	8	35	118

EXPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Avril.	Mai.	Juin.	Total.	Avril.	Mai.	Juin.	Total.
Orge	Kilog.	150	..	..	150	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.
Blé .. ..	..	2,500	..	..	2,500	18 00	..	..	18 00
Chèvres .. ..	..	500	..	..	500	275 00	..	..	275 00
Mouchoirs	Pièce	35	..	..	35	75 00	..	..	75 00
Houles .. ..	..	20	..	..	20	350 00	1,200 00	1,200 00	2,750 00
Cotonnades .. ..	..	15	..	3	18	20 00	..	..	20 00
Chéchias .. ..	..	22	..	22	44	15 00	..	61 00	76 00
Marchandises diverses	Franc	5	..	5	10	340 00	..	172 00	512 00
		..	..	..	..	10 00	..	22 00	32 00
		..	..	..	..	..	3,500 00	7,943 90	11,443 90
Total du 2 ^e trimestre ..		..	..	..	..	1,103 00	4,700 00	9,598 90	15,201 90
Numéraire pour mémoire ..		..	..	..	..	780 00	..	..	780 00
Nombre de caravanes ..		..	..	..	..	Avril	Mai	Juin	Total.
" d'hommes ..		..	..	..	..	9	1	5	15
" d'animaux ..		..	..	..	..	54	10	23	87
		..	..	..	..	54	15	31	100

RELEVÉ du Mouvement des Caravanes dans le Sud de la Régence pendant le 3^e Trimestre de 1896.

IMPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Juillet.	Août.	Sept.	Total.	Juillet.	Août.	Sept.	Total.
Orge	Hectol.	112	122	495	639	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.
Blé .. ..	..	115	1,845	1,693	3,653	728 00	941 00	3,249 80	4,918 80
Natron	Kilog.	1,296	5,200	1,484	7,980	1,293 75	24,879 00	23,799 90	49,968 20
Chameaux	Pièce	63	14	..	77	653 00	2,080 00	662 64	3,395 64
Huile	Litre	450	650	650	1,750	7,000 00	462 00	..	7,462 00
Peaux d'antilope	Nombre	..	2	..	2	270 00	520 00	520 00	1,310 00
Souliers brodés .. ..	..	..	31	30	61	..	15 00	..	15 00
Couvertures, plates .. ..	..	..	15	1	16	..	217 00	200 00	417 00
Pêves du Soudan .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	30 00	2 50	32 50
Essences .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	12 00	..	12 00
Peaux filées .. ..	..	..	146	186	332	..	200 00	400 00	600 00
Poignards Touaregs .. ..	..	..	8	12	20	..	730 00	975 00	1,705 00
Peaux de gazelle .. ..	..	..	6	4	10	..	80 00	102 00	182 00
Pommade odorante	Kilog.	..	2	..	2	..	18 00	12 00	30 00
		..	..	..	..	..	45 00	120 00	165 00
Total du 3 ^e trimestre ..		..	..	..	..	9,944 75	30,224 55	30,043 84	70,213 14
Nombre de caravanes ..		..	..	..	..	Juillet.	Août.	Sept.	Total.
" d'hommes ..		..	..	..	..	9	72	103	184
" d'animaux ..		..	..	..	..	60	437	563	1,060
		..	..	..	..	158	760	739	1,657

EXPORTATIONS.

Désignation des Marchandises.	Unité.	Quantités.				Valeurs.			
		Juillet.	Août.	Sept.	Total.	Juillet.	Août.	Sept.	Total.
Cotonnades	Pièce	17	60	5	82	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.	Fr. c.
Tapis de soles .. ..	..	2	..	..	2	186 25	379 50	37 50	603 00
Orge	Hectol.	9	..	..	9	10 00	..	..	10 00
Épicerie .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	60 75	..	..	60 75
Sucre	Kilog.	..	300	500	800	50 00	..	..	50 00
Blé	Hectol.	..	44	..	44	..	122 00	180 00	302 00
Huile	Litre	..	31	..	31	..	436 00	..	436 00
Bougies	Paquet	..	100	200	300	..	2,480 00	..	2,480 00
Biscuits .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	52 00	104 00	156 00
Souliers en toile	Pièce	..	12	..	12	..	19 00	..	19 00
Houles .. ..	..	..	18	101	119	..	8 50	..	8 50
Mouchoirs .. ..	..	..	134	..	134	..	9 00	392 00	401 00
Serviettes .. ..	..	..	12	..	12	..	37 50	..	37 50
Toile rouge	Mètre	..	120	..	120	..	11 40	..	11 40
Étoffes diverses .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	30 00	..	30 00
Savon	Kilog.	..	..	500	500	..	4,000 00	..	4,000 00
Amandes .. ..	..	..	..	500	500	..	..	150 00	150 00
Moutons et chèvres .. ..	..	..	..	..	..	..	..	80 00	80 00
Marchandises diverses .. ..	..	..	..	325	325	..	..	1,200 00	1,200 00
Tissus de laine	Pièce	..	..	1	1	..	..	475 00	475 00
Savates en cuir .. ..	..	..	..	66	66	..	..	11 70	11 70
		..	..	..	..	..	..	79 20	79 20
Total du 3 ^e trimestre ..		..	..	..	..	397 00	7,584 90	2,709 40	10,601 30
Nombre de caravanes ..		..	..	..	..	Juillet.	Août.	Sept.	Total.
" d'hommes ..		..	..	..	..	4	4	2	10
" d'animaux ..		..	..	..	..	22	19	8	49
		..	..	..	..	43	29	27	99

No. 79.

Consul-General Haggard to the Marquess of Salisbury.—(Received December 21.)

(No. 91. Confidential.)

My Lord,

Tunis, December 3, 1896.

ALTHOUGH, owing to the fortunate fiction of Tunis being still ruled by the Bey, and the consequent maintenance of the revenue, which is, so far, to a great extent secured by our Treaty with His Highness, the Regency has as yet not proved a drain on the French Treasury, save to the extent of the expenses of the army, as Tunis is thereby spared all military expenses, and is able to devote all its resources to those of internal government, the success which is claimed for the Administration by the fact of the equalization of the yearly Budget is more apparent than real.

This, however, has so far enabled the authorities to indulge in the practices familiar to observers of French colonial administration without coming upon the mother country.

But, apart from what will happen if the present system be changed, it seems possible that, even under that actually existing, the expenses may end in overlapping the revenue.

As I had the honour of reporting to your Lordship in my despatch No. 3 of the 7th January last, M. Merlon, a Deputy, sent by the French Government specially to report on the condition of Tunis, asserted in his official statement that one-third of the total French Colony—men, women, and children—were "fonctionnaires." As the number of colonists does not increase, while that of "fonctionnaires" does, this proportion is constantly growing larger. For instance, whereas up till lately the octroi of Susa and of the large villages or small towns lying between that town and Cape Bon—some ten in number—have been gathered by some forty collectors, working under the old Arab system of farming the taxes, the British Vice-Consul at Susa informs me that from the 1st January this system is to be abolished, and their place is to be taken by 300 French collectors. It is impossible to conceive that, even allowing that these officials are more honest than is usually the case amongst French colonial "fonctionnaires," the appointment of this swarm of useless tax-collectors will result in anything but a dead loss to the Government. It is true

that these men will be miserably paid, but, even at 50*l.* each, their salaries will amount to 15,000*l.* a-year, and, moreover, if they do not cheat the Government, they will make that up as well as they can by exactions on the natives.

My servant tells me that whenever he buys anything in the market here he is positively mobbed by these collectors, who gather in a crowd round each buyer.

The same system is followed in every Department, with the result that public business is inefficiently performed. The Post Office, for instance, is most irregularly conducted; for short distances from Tunis I find it quicker to send a messenger than a telegram, even though I pay "express."

Such appointments are at one and the same time a sop to hostile critics, and a support to the existing Administration, as their promotion depends on their subservience to the Residency, and, to secure this support more completely, and to turn it, moreover, to effect, the Resident-General has lately, by the appointment of a third "Collège," composed of these "petits fonctionnaires," got a packed majority in the "Conférence Consultative," the only semblance of check, which had hitherto existed on the exercise of his absolute authority.

From whatever point of view such a system is looked at, it is difficult to conceive anything worse or more likely to prove detrimental to the real interests of sound administration. This is becoming daily more apparent. There are not sufficient funds to provide a proper police force. This poverty was actually proffered as an excuse at the time of the Leach outrage, and since that tragedy constant assassinations and robberies with violence have been committed, generally with impunity, especially on the high roads near the large towns, more particularly in the neighbourhood of Tunis.

I am assured by old inhabitants that before the French occupation such offences were almost unknown. They have certainly much increased since my stay here, and nothing whatever seems to be done to stop them, with the result that people are becoming fearful of driving out of Tunis, which is itself in many parts not safe after dark, as robberies and assassinations in the open street by revolver, knife, or razor are of constant, I might almost say of nightly, occurrence.

I have, &c.
(Signed) W. H. D. HAGGARD.

No. 80.

Admiralty to Foreign Office.—(Received December 23.)

(Confidential.)

Sir,

Admiralty, December 21, 1896.

WITH reference to your letter of the 5th December forwarding copy of a despatch from Her Majesty's Consul-General at Tunis respecting the report which has been published in the "Dépêche" that the British fleet had been engaged in practising the blockade of the port of Bizerta, I am commanded by my Lords Commissioners of the Admiralty to transmit, for the perusal of the Marquess of Salisbury, copy of the remarks of Admiral Sir Michael Culme-Seymour, in which he states that the report is entirely untrue and has no foundation in fact.

I am, &c.
(Signed) EVAN MACGREGOR.

Inclosure in No. 80.

Memorandum by Admiral Sir M. Culme-Seymour.

THE statement in "La Dépêche Tunisienne" is entirely untrue and has no foundation in fact. I left Malta on the 8th July last with the fleet for Gibraltar (in the usual order, cruisers looking out ahead and on each bow) and took the direct route, which of necessity passes near Bizerta, but I don't think I was ever within 10 or 12 miles of it.

On the 9th at 4.15 P.M. the nearest ship to Bizerta being about 20 miles from it, I stopped and each ship hoisted out boats and practised firing Whiteheads, at a target towed past by a steam-boat. At 7 P.M. proceeded. On the 10th at 10.20 A.M., being then 150 miles from Bizerta, I stopped and exercised firing great guns at a target. At 1 P.M. proceeded.

The direct course from Malta to Gibraltar was not deviated from, except that I kept further off the African coast than was necessary. A speed of 10 knots was maintained, and Bizerta never entered into my mind in any way.

(Signed) M. CULME-SEYMOUR.